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Don Fotheringham

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JBS leaders react to member concerns

Thank you to those who received my mailing for taking the information seriously. Your comments clearly got the attention of someone at headquarters, because on January 31, 2006, I received the [linked note](#) and [letter \(retyped\)](#). Although their author is not identified, the main letter is signed by 19 JBS employees. It contains a number of errors and flaws, which I address in [my response](#).

The following letter, mailed to selected JBS leaders and members, defines the purpose of this website.

January 10, 2006

To: My friends in The John Birch Society

I am sending this letter to JBS friends whom I have met and/or worked with over the years. Some of you are members of the field staff, chapter leaders, youth camp instructors, and speaker chairmen.

Friends have called me to ask what's going on with the leadership changes in The John Birch Society. I have answered them as clearly and honestly as possible. At their urging, I am sharing this information with you. Certainly -- on the face of it -- my perceptions are the same as yours: Something is not right in Appleton. I will do my best to address the problem as I understand it, and to explain and document what is at the core of it.

On the face of it --

Proper leadership changes in the JBS do not happen without a farewell message from the outgoing officers. This custom and courtesy was employed in the resignations of Robert Welch, Cliff Barker, Chuck Armour, and Allen Bubolz. Why then do we hear nothing from Vance Smith? Moreover, at no time in our 47-year history had newly appointed officers disparaged and demeaned the men they have just replaced. This is unprecedented and raises serious questions.

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The rather offensive implications first appeared in the December *Bulletin* in a message from Jack McManus and in a letter signed by the two sons of Robert Welch, individuals who, during the lifetime of their father, never joined or took any part in building the Society. But now they say they were seriously concerned over the direction the Society was taking, and regretted ♦the concentration of power in the hands of a single individual.♦ Had they read *The Blue Book* they would understand that monolithic leadership cannot become ♦dictatorial♦ when employed in a group allowing members to freely join and freely resign -- a principle their father clearly explained in Section Eight ♦Through The John Birch Society....♦ (See the [enclosed copy of this.](#))

Another sign on the surface, so out of character with true leadership, appeared in a fund-raising letter dated December 9 by Arthur Thompson, the new CEO. In this letter he praised the new leadership (himself) and blamed the former leaders for failure to adopt innovative ideas and for creating the financial shortfall he faced.

So here we have new JBS leaders utilizing the national *Bulletin* and a mass mailing for taking potshots at the former leaders. This one-way communication unfairly muzzles the men about whom they speak with so much disdain. After 14 years of dedicated service, have Vance Smith and Tom Gow simply dropped off the face of the earth? But more significantly, we must ask, what happened to the process established by Robert Welch for the proper and open removal or appointment of JBS leaders? Simply stated, the safeguards Mr. Welch set in place have been circumvented. How is this possible? I will explain.

At the core of it --

In 1958, Robert Welch founded The John Birch Society under the laws of incorporation in Massachusetts. He was legally required to name a Board of Incorporators. So he named himself, his wife, his secretary, and a few close friends as members of the board. He never mentioned this and never intended for it to be used for anything other than to satisfy the corporate legal requirements of the state of Massachusetts. [*Note correction below.](#)

Soon thereafter, Mr. Welch established an Advisory Council of about 20 men. He then vested executive replacement authority in an Executive Committee of five to seven individuals chosen from among members of the Council. It was the responsibility of the Executive Committee ♦to select, with absolute and final authority,♦ a successor to the highest office. You will find this on page 172 of *The Blue Book*. Until now, this procedure had been faithfully followed.

However, 47 years later, with new members on the Board of Incorporators, this innocuous body exercised its latent legal authority. This came as a surprise to everyone except those who engineered it. Never at any time was the Board of Incorporators intended to be

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anything but a legal fixture for launching the JBS. On October 21 the board altered the structure that was so carefully and wisely set in place by Robert Welch to prevent infiltration and demoralization by our enemies. The Board deviously took the appointment authority away from the Executive Committee and, in effect, made Jack McManus the President and Arthur Thompson the CEO.

When this brazen step was taken, three key, veteran members of the Executive Committee, Wayne Rickert, Walt Ruckel, and Keith Van Buskirk resigned from the Committee in protest. They had scheduled a meeting to deal with the leadership matter on October 29 and had pleaded with the Board to hold off their action for eight days, until the Executive Committee could convene and all sides of the issue be heard. But no, three members (a majority) of the Board refused to allow the system to work and rushed into their meeting on October 21. Thus, three men circumvented the ♦absolute and final authority♦ of the Executive Committee. Doesn♦t this rash, no-huddle play seem a bit strange to you?

In the December *Bulletin*, Jack McManus tells our members that Mr. Smith frequently stated he would depart ♦gracefully and quietly♦ should the Society♦s ♦properly constituted authority reach such a decision.♦ Well Jack, we♦re still waiting for the properly constituted authority to reach such a decision. Jack McManus well knows that replacing officers is not the role of the Board of Incorporators. However, the incentive to dishonor this perfunctory trust was quite high for Mr. McManus because he is a member of the Board, and cast the improper vote to dump Vance Smith and create an office for himself.

It is interesting to note that Jack McManus, who was in on the plot to crank up the power of the Board of Incorporators, and bring about these developments, alludes to them in the *Bulletin* as being ♦remarkably unexpected.♦

On that same day, October 21, the Society♦s President and CEO, Vance Smith was forced to resign (and so did our esteemed Vice President Tom Gow). I am enclosing a [copy of the letter](#) and support material sent by Vance Smith to the Council on November 7. Knowing the Council had received this material, and realizing the Executive Committee had been denied its hearing, I assumed the Council would take steps to make the truth known and dispel the many false charges levied against Vance Smith. Apparently this did not happen and therefore I am sending a copy of that letter to you.

There is considerable irony in the fact that Vance Smith was forced to resign by two staff members (Jack McManus and Larry Waters) and one former staff member (John Fall) violating their perfunctory role as members of the Board of Incorporators. If this corruption of the system is allowed to remain, it would not be hard for our enemies to sabotage and destroy the organization.

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I think it is absolutely essential that we plug this dangerous loophole by returning to the Executive Committee those three principled men who resigned on October 21: Wayne Rickert, Walt Ruckel, and Keith Van Buskirk. Because these men are not on the JBS payroll and all have devoted much time and considerable resources to the Society, they will not endanger it simply to save their hide or their pride.

Once the Executive Committee is restored to its mid-October makeup, this body will exercise its authority to properly appoint new JBS officers. They must also be appointed as responsible members of the Board of Incorporators. I feel certain the Council would welcome these men back into the Executive Committee and would respect their judgment regarding the urgency of controlling the Board of Incorporators.

If this makes sense to you ♦ that is, if you want to save the Society from unwise friends or ultra-wise enemies, please contact me immediately and I will give your name to the Council, stating that you want them to reconstitute the authority of the Executive Committee and close the loophole in the Board of Incorporators. Frankly, if this, or something similar, is not done, I think we will lose our only hope for a free America.

Nobody asked me to write this letter and my purpose is not to campaign for Vance Smith or any other personality for leadership in the Society. As mentioned earlier, I am sending this only to you wonderful men and women I know. I do not have a JBS membership list, so please help by making copies for others ♦ or if you prefer, just send me their names and addresses and I will send them the material.

Please let me know how you feel ♦ one way or another ♦ by phone: 435-648-2766, by fax: 435-648-2765, by email: [Don Fotheringham](#), or by mail at Box 59, Glendale, UT 84729.

Sincerely and urgently,

Don Fotheringham

P.S. There is another way to get this message out: I have started my own website especially for this purpose. Anyone can access it by going to: www.donfoth.com

cc: Members of the JBS Advisory Council

***Correction:** In a recent letter from John Fall, he said Robert Welch told him privately that he deemed the Board of Incorporators to be "an important ultimate safeguard with the power to act when subordinate channels of leadership might become derelict or worse in their duties to keep the Society on its true course and to his (Mr. Welch's) intended purpose." Mr. Fall's correction does not hinder my case in the least, for in fact the Society was precisely on its intended course and thus the

meeting of the Board, and its rash decision, was entirely unjustified.

For more information:

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FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

1. Q: Why this website?

A: This website exists because it is the only means by which members of the John Birch Society can learn the truth about what has happened to the organization. A knowledge of what has taken place is essential if we expect to save our country. I am convinced that for 47 years the Birch Society has been kept on course with help from God, and that His help came because we employed truth against our enemy and upheld truth as a standard among ourselves.

But the principle of truth among ourselves was thrown out the window last year by certain individuals who created and circulated false reports for the purpose of overthrowing the Society's leadership.

2. Q: What got you concerned?

A: My first inkling that something strange was under way came at the Robert Welch Club in Salt Lake City in April 2005. When I greeted the Utah and Idaho coordinators - three very dear, long-time friends - I was received with flimsy handshakes and almost zero eye contact. Wow! Do I need a better deodorant? What on earth is this all about?

I was puzzled by the cool reception in Salt Lake until months later when I learned that a coup had been under way since about that time. Art Crino, then a member of the Executive Committee, told our Washington coordinator that he had been working to dump Vance Smith, our CEO, since April of 2005. Another belated confession came to me directly from Council member Cliff Wasem, who said he had been working energetically on the plan since May, 2005

I guess my long-time friends on the staff would not trust Don Fotheringham with such sensational news, and they were right. I would certainly have blown the whistle. And that might have prevented the disastrous circumstances we now face.

3. Q: How was the planned coup uncovered?

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A: Finally, in September 2005, Vance Smith got wind of the plot, and asked Art Thompson, his Development Officer, if he knew anything about a coup. Art said, "Yes, and I am part of it." He immediately told Vance that he had better not fire him because it was "irreversible," that everything was in place. He assured Vance that there was nothing anyone could do to stop it.

4. Q: How did the coup prevail?

A: The instigators were emboldened because they saw an opportunity to persuade a majority of the members of the Board of Incorporators, which held the formal legal authority at JBS, that a crisis existed, and that the life of the JBS depended upon immediate intervention by the Incorporators. The Board then voted to bypass the succession process established by Robert Welch and, via a new intermediate Board of Directors, appoint two of their numbers and the prime instigator as President, Vice President, and CEO respectively.

5. Q: What was the normal succession route?

A: All previous leaders, after Robert Welch, had been appointed strictly by the process ordained by the founder (through the Executive Committee of the National Council); therefore nobody expected the Incorporators to usurp the leadership authority of the Executive Committee. But this unprecedented step was taken, and it has turned the Birch Society upside down. It has damaged the carefully-set boundary that up to that time had prevented the democratic campaigning for an identified leader. Mr. Welch was adamant about preventing such a thing.

6. Q: How was such a revolution possible?

A: Art Thompson, Art Crino and Cliff Wasem had circulated letters and petitions in the Council and among staff members as a means of gaining popular support for the removal of Vance Smith. Even had the charges against Mr. Smith been true, no cause could justify the reckless action taken October 21 when the Incorporators tore apart our monolithic structure. This website exists to bring this fact to light and to propose the means for getting back our great institution and the freedom of our country.

The takeover was a classic example of communist tactics at work. The incessant cry that "Smith must go," was so shrill that no serious attention was paid to the fourfold damage being inflicted on the Society: 1) the loss of our monolithic structure, 2) the dismissal of our most responsible Executive Committee, 3) the loss of intelligent, dynamic leadership (Vance Smith and Tom Gow), and 4) the loss of considerable financial support from key members of the Executive Committee: Wayne Rickert, Walt Ruckel, and Keith Van Buskirk.

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7. Q: What is the authority structure now?

A: We now face the problem of a Board of Incorporators that has appointed two of its own members to the Society's top leadership positions: Jack McManus as President, and Larry Waters as Vice President. And guess who is the new CEO? The coup mastermind himself, Art Thompson. He was awarded the title of Chief Executive Officer, replacing the man he so flagrantly maligned. And as long as they can maintain a majority vote on the Board of Incorporators, they really are accountable to no one.

Does anyone really think we can expect God's help in our fight for freedom after the disgraceful performance of those who engineered the takeover of the John Birch Society?

8. Q: What is the solution?

A: The solution is to build informed pressure on current JBS leaders, their support on the Council, and thereby on the Incorporators to restore the leadership structure as it was constituted on October 1, 2005. That means restoring the supreme authority of the Executive Committee as it was developed by Robert Welch and the men who were in place before the coup.

Since foul and improper means cannot lead to good ends, we recommend, as part of that program, exposing the smear campaign and tactics that enabled a few men in 2005 to destroy the power structure developed by Robert Welch and seize the reigns of authority at JBS.

9. Q: What can I, as a JBS member, do to correct this problem?

[Click here for Recommended Action for Concerned JBS Members](#)

A: As always, inform yourself before acting. As one source, consider the information provided on this website. And check back frequently for new information.

Build pressure for reform by communicating your written assessment where it will count ([click here for recommended addresses](#)).

10. Q: Wasn't Art Crino booted off the Executive Committee for failing to give Vance Smith a vote of confidence?

A: No. Art was booted off because he had been working behind the backs of the other Executive Committee members to organize a change in the Society's leadership. As this was the proper responsibility of the Executive Committee, the other members felt betrayed.

11. Q: Didn't Vance Smith steal the buildings that house the JBS and American Opinion Books in Appleton?

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A: Ridiculous! In late October, Vance Smith and Tom Gow, with the concurrence of the JBS Board of Directors, took steps to ensure that the JBS would own its own buildings way into the future.

Vance and Tom formalized the understanding they had with the JBS National Council and top donors who had contributed to the purchase of the buildings. Many of these donors were promised at the time they contributed that the buildings would continue to benefit the Society far into the future. They were told that the Society would manage its financial affairs responsibly and no longer incur huge debt simply because the Society was unwilling to live within its means.

That pledge had been honored for more than 10 years, but Vance, Tom, and other Executive Committee members were concerned that the incoming team who had orchestrated the coup would no longer respect this pledge. So a restrictive covenant was placed on the buildings to be held in trust as an endowment for the future of JBS.

JBS still owns its buildings, but a restriction on their sale or mortgage is held in trust. Vance and Tom are not Trustees for the Endowment Trust and have absolutely no say in the matter at this point. Since the JBS still owns its buildings, no one has any personal interest in the buildings and it is another false rumor to suggest that JBS could be charged rent by the Trust. In fact, JBS leaders who are now suing to break the Trust, can still sell or mortgage the buildings if there is a compelling reason for doing so, but for a period of ten years they would need to seek and obtain permission from the Trustees of the Trust.

12. Q: Didn't Vance Smith and Tom Gow steal Robert Welch University when they resigned and occupied the University?

A: No. Vance had Tom had been officers of RWU for more than a decade and were serving on the top RWU boards that controlled RWU, when the coup at JBS occurred. When Tom resigned from JBS he moved his office to RWU and went on the RWU payroll. Vance already had an office at RWU, but did not come on the RWU payroll until January of 2006.

The split between JBS and RWU was created by the new leaders of JBS who decided they could not work with RWU as long as they were not directly in charge. The JBS and Robert Welch University were always independent corporations, although the top boards of many of these were populated by members of the JBS Executive Committee. Generally, most of the corporations in the JBS family did not have their own payroll and were run and managed by JBS employees. But the various corporate boards always operated at arms length to preserve the independent status. But in 2003 RWU went one step further in establishing its independence by establishing its own payroll and hiring its own employees, although RWU still received some services from JBS.

13. Q: Isn't Vance Smith suing the John Birch Society?

A: Absolutely not. When a few employees of The John Birch Society decided on November 11, 2005 to unlawfully break into and seize control of Robert Welch University, an independent corporation, they were not acting on behalf of The John Birch Society. The veteran members of the Board of Trustees/Incorporators of RWU then obtained a Temporary Restraining Order to regain physical control of RWU. They then filed a lawsuit in Outagamie County Court on behalf of RWU for permanent control. The Defendants in that case were specific individuals ♦ not The John Birch Society. The Defendants then filed a counterclaim. That was in November of 2005 and the matter stands for trial on July 17, 2006. Then in January of 2006, some of the same employees at JBS filed a new lawsuit on behalf of The John Birch Society against G. Vance Smith, Tom Gow, RWU and the other members of the RWU Board of Incorporators.

14. Q: Do you think it is right to air the JBS dirty laundry on a website?

A: This website is the only efficient way many members have to receive an independent perspective on what has happened at and to The John Birch Society. I believe this service is desperately needed at this time and that many members very much want this information and to be able to pass it on to other members efficiently.

No one wants to provide aid and comfort to the enemies of JBS or provide those enemies with ready information about personalities, etc., which they could use to harm JBS. However, the principal threat to the JBS right now is not from without. If responsible action, based on sound information, is not taken so that the JBS survives as a viable organized force in the freedom fight, what our enemies might do in the future won't matter.

15. Q: How can you defend Vance Smith after reading Steve Bonta's bitter letter?

A: Steve Bonta resigned from RWU on June 22, 2005. It is important to understand that his June letter of resignation (posted on this website) is cordial and professional. In fact, his resignation was followed by several courteous ♦ almost apologetic ♦ voice-mail messages to Vance Smith. In one message Steve said, "Please understand that I do not have any bitterness or rancor toward you or anyone else at the JBS."

So what happened four months later to provoke Bonta's long, vitriolic attack on Vance Smith? Leaders of the mutiny saw an opportunity to cash in on Steve's resignation. They told Steve that Vance Smith and Tom Gow had started a rumor that Steve had had an affair with a girl from RWU Camp. Apparently, this evil report so enraged Steve that he was goaded into writing his second, terribly bitter letter ♦ a letter that has been widely circulated by Art Thompson, and made available to the

Council and the entire Field Staff.

No one believes the absurd rumor about the girl from camp. But Steve was less than prudent in 1) believing that anyone would conjure up a story so completely out of his character, and 2) that he would not first go privately to the accused perpetrator, rather than to immediately project his bitterness on the public screen.

Steve is a talented writer, but his letter contains significant errors. Just to show that there is another side to the story, here are a few examples:

- ◆ Steve admits that Vance was grooming him (Steve) to succeed Vance as the leader at RWU, yet he is later critical of Vance, insisting that Vance had no plans for a successor. (Vance had told Steve that in time a university president would be selected and that he, Vance, would stay on as a member of the board only.)
- ◆ Steve seriously misstates key parts of the record, such as the conflict over funding at RWU.
- ◆ Steve makes much ado over the entry of Paul Smith as an equal to himself at RWU; however Steve was being assigned properly over school education, while Paul was being placed over RWU administration. Bear in mind that, prior to this, Steve had abdicated his role as RWU's chief administrator and had by default turned those duties over to a man whose past record had proven him incapable of doing the job. Better administration was desperately needed. Steve objected to having anyone equal to himself at RWU, so Vance relented and agreed that Paul would report to Steve. Apparently, in order to justify himself, Steve needed to amplify his case and therefore he re-invented the leadership matter, implying that Vance had gone back on his word.
- ◆ Steve's letter asserts that Vance demanded accountability from others, but was not himself accountable to anyone. Steve must know better than that, for 14 years every member of the Executive Committee received and reviewed regular reports on the state of the JBS and lately RWU. Much of the pressure for performance, that made Steve so uncomfortable, came from those who held Vance Smith strictly accountable in every phase of the freedom fight. Notice that those members of the Executive Committee to whom Vance reported have valiantly defended him through these difficult months.
- ◆ There is a good bit of irony in Steve's bitter assault on Vance Smith ◆ railing on him for gossip and slander ◆ for after his weekly meeting with Vance on high-level leadership matters, Steve routinely returned to RWU where he made disparaging remarks to members of his staff and betrayed confidential details regarding his meetings with Vance.
- ◆ It was my privilege to work under Vance Smith for 10 years. He kept accurate records in both visual and audio form (thank the Lord he did!). Those records, some of which are on this website, expose the duplicity

of those who have maligned Vance and turned the freedom battle upside down.

16. Q: Didn't Vance Smith accuse Jack McManus of being anti-Semitic?

A: Several years ago, Vance and several employees now at JBS, including Art Thompson and fellow Catholic Gary Benoit, as well as members of the JBS Executive Committee were shocked when they discovered statements Jack had been making at religious conferences. Some of these conferences were even providing platforms to blatant anti-Semites.

Vance and other JBS leaders were extremely concerned that because of Jack's position as President of the Society at the time (and now again), his carelessly worded statements and careless associations could easily cast doubt on the Society's clear history of opposition to anti-Semitism.

At the time, Vance and others kept the matter quiet and tried to reason with Jack to help him see the danger and to realize how his statements were not at all religious in character and how they contradicted the great wisdom Robert Welch had repeatedly expressed on the matter. Despite the many voices of concern, and Jack's assurances of future restraint, he continued to flirt with these associations and enjoy the attention he received. Those who understood this record became concerned when Jack managed to achieve a position at JBS, backed by his position on the Board of Incorporators, where he effectively had to answer to no one.

17. Q: Who do you think would make a good leader for The John Birch Society?

A: I don't think that is properly a matter for the members to decide. Or that they should even campaign for particular candidates. There are reasons why the Founding Fathers did not want the American people to choose the President, and some of those apply to our situation, as well. The Society's top executive needs to be selected in a calm atmosphere by people who have the opportunity to evaluate his capabilities for the job, not just respond to his public face. And then if the executive does not work out, if he does not deliver results, then, like the owners of an athletic team, they need to hire a new coach.

That said, I would hope that a restored Executive Committee would take another look at G. Vance Smith's record. After all, Vance did bring important stability to the Society when it seemed to be changing leaders every few years. Under Vance's 14 years of leadership the Society weathered many storms, made some significant progress, and stayed true to the vision of Robert Welch.

18. Q: Why did our most generous donors resign from the Executive Committee?

A: In October of 2005, a majority of the JBS Board of Incorporators decided to use its corporate authority to choose a new Board of Directors for JBS and repudiate the Executive Committee's long-standing responsibility for choosing the leadership of JBS.

The Incorporators, including two of the employees who were insisting that G. Vance Smith resign, even refused to postpone their action until after a full airing of the charges leveled against Vance could occur at a meeting of the National Council scheduled for a mere eight days later. The Incorporators rejected this reasonable request despite the fact that a majority of the Council members had signed a petition asking for just such a postponement. The Council wanted the opportunity to hear both sides and ask questions.

But the Incorporators refused and proceeded to effectively neuter the Executive Committee, turning these men into mere figureheads. Moreover, the instigators of the coup had insulted these donors by accusing them of being in Vance's pocket and trying to buy The John Birch Society. The donors weren't about to support arrogant men who were not even interested in their counsel.

19. Q: Where did the Board of Incorporators get so much authority?

A: With many corporations, a Board of Incorporators exists only long enough to get the organization started and is immediately replaced by stockholders. Mr. Welch set up the JBS so that the Incorporators would be the permanent equivalent of stockholders. Their corporate function was to elect a Board of Directors, who would in turn choose the officers. Mr. Welch staffed both of these corporate boards with trusted employees who would carry out the statutory requirements of the JBS as a Massachusetts corporation.

These boards had always held supreme statutory authority but had respected their role of operating in the background. For Mr. Welch did not intend that these statutory boards would choose the future leadership for the nationwide membership organization he was founding. He wanted a subcommittee of the prestigious men he recruited to the National Council to have that responsibility.

However, in September-October of 2005, a majority of the Board of Incorporators (two JBS employees and one former employee) were persuaded that it was their calling to override the judgment of the Executive Committee and, more importantly, of Robert Welch, and, relying on the corporate power of the Board, assume supreme working authority over the entire John Birch Society.

20. Q: Why didn't members of the Council oppose the process that damaged our structure?

A: Many did. And not just members of the Executive Committee. A

majority of members of the National Council petitioned the JBS Board of Incorporators not to intervene and instead let the Council meet in Orlando to air the charges. Only two members of the Council -- Art Crino and Cliff Wasem -- were actively campaigning to topple Vance. Many of the rest had been predisposed negatively toward Vance based on hearsay from staff whom they respected who called them with a litany of complaints.

That's why it was so refreshing that a great majority of the Council also wanted to meet in Orlando to hear both sides. We should all be distressed that the JBS Board of Incorporators determined that they could not delay for even eight days until after Orlando, but that G.Vance Smith suddenly posed such a serious threat after 14 years of leadership that the Incorporators needed to take this unprecedented step. More likely, they feared that their complaints against Vance would not be validated in Orlando and that even if the Executive Committee decided to replace Vance that they would not be chosen as the new leaders.

21. Q: Why don't you give the new team a chance to show what they can do?

A: Today, the new team is indisputably in charge. By speaking out, I am not in anyway denying them their chance to show what they can do. If my voice were quiet, other members who are questioning the leadership they are receiving would still wonder what is going on. In frustration, some may well drop out of the fight. However, if members understand what has happened and what needs to be repaired, they may be willing to stick it out and even help to motivate positive change.

22. Q: Why don't you just shut up and let us get on with the freedom battle?

A: Because I care about the outcome. The freedom battle cannot be won without sound organizational leadership. The current leadership at JBS appears to be just playing with some of the issues. Where is the plan for victory and the challenge to members to implement that plan? For example, the recent (July) Bulletin offers no plan to get us out of the United Nations or even a vision of that objective. It contains plenty of newsletter-style criticism of the UN but fails to ask members to do anything about the UN other than contacting their congressman in support of H.R. 1146 (while members are asked to congratulate their rep if he is a cosponsor they are not tasked to ask him to become one if he, like most, is not). But what if their congressman won't listen? What should members do to get him to listen? Silence. What is the purpose of the Bulletin if not to provide leadership for action? The vital Recruitment section lacks ANY suggestions or even a request for recruitment, strangely devoting that space to the immigration campaign and pending legislation. Yet we know that the Society must grow, under sound leadership, to have any chance of winning significant victories.

The name of your business goes here

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TQs (Tough Questions)

Here are some suggestions for tough questions to ask the temporary leadership team at JBS:

Questions for Art Thompson (JBS CEO)

Background to first Q: Art, in a November 21, 2005 signed affidavit, a public document, you stated: "[E]specially for the past 8 years, overall JBS membership is down and continues to downward trend [sic], along with its regular revenue streams, JBS Chapter formation, and including financial support from the JBS Continuing Support Clubs. Employee morale was reflected in the financial condition. Now that new and responsible leadership is at the helm of the JBS, I anticipate the present circumstances will, in the coming months, stabilize and then improve."

Q: Art, it has been many months since you became JBS CEO in October of 2005. Which of the above has improved or even stabilized? How can our recruiting be up with significantly fewer Coordinators? How can field morale be up, at least among the remaining Coordinators, when their expense checks are late and they see their fellow staff members being laid off? What has happened to the circulation of The New American? Weren't you in charge of fundraising during the last few years when the JBS revenue streams fell short?

Q: Art, didn't you tell John Fall before the infamous Incorporator vote that you would be willing to fill the G. Vance Smith void at JBS on a temporary basis that could last up to two years? What is your projection now and whom are you grooming as your replacement?

Questions for Jack McManus (JBS President)

Q: Jack, you were a member of the five-man Board of Incorporators last October when the B of I intervened to strip the Executive Committee of its authority. Would the Incorporators have done so without your vote?

Q: Jack, why did your Board of Incorporators not wait eight days to strip

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the Executive Committee's authority, as requested by 16 of 22 Council members? Why did you not want to allow the Executive Committee and the National Council to hash out the concerns that had been raised over G. Vance Smith?

Q: Jack, if the Executive Committee had decided to and been allowed to remove G. Vance Smith as CEO, whom do you think they would have tapped as a replacement? Might it have been you?

Q: Jack, did you ever discuss your plan to use the Incorporator card with fellow Incorporators Gary Benoit and Tom Gow prior to noticing them of the special meeting that would change the succession structure for the Society? If not, why not?

Q: Jack, what led you to believe that Art Thompson could fill the CEO shoes of G. Vance Smith? Were you aware of any deficiencies in Art's abilities as a manager or leader? As an infrequent visitor to Appleton and a non-manager yourself, how could you have judged Art's abilities?

Q: Jack, why do none of the three current officers of the JBS live in Appleton, Wisconsin? Who is running the Society in your absence? Does the leadership vacuum not concern you? How can such a situation result in an improvement of member or field employee morale?

Questions for Larry Waters (JBS Vice President)

Q: Larry, you were a member of Jack's Board of Incorporators who cast the swing vote to neuter the Executive Committee, fire G. Vance Smith, and install Art Thompson as CEO. Are you pleased with the results? What specifically?

Q: Larry, what new responsibilities have you assumed as Vice President? How does that work with your self-imposed exile in Plano, Texas?

Q: Larry, you lobbied hard for the replacement of G. Vance Smith and promoted Art Thompson, whom you had reported to for many months. As a Texas resident, with hardly any presence in Appleton, what convinced you that Art could handle the multiple JBS management challenges?

Q: Larry, from your perspective, what is the member and donor reaction to the new Bulletin format? To the new leadership?

Q: Larry, you have long advocated a greater investment in marketing and PR to make recruitment easier. How does that work with a reduced field staff? How many Coordinators has it cost to hire the new non-JBS marketing and PR leaders?

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Q: Larry, you, Art, and Jack do not reside in Appleton. Who is running the store on a day-to-day basis? Is it Chris Bentley? Or is it Alan Scholl? Or could it be the new non-member marketing and PR leaders? Or is there no one in charge? What is the Birch leadership experience of whoever is running the store in Appleton?

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P. O. Box 8124, Bonney Lake, WA 98390 Fax: (253) 891-8215

**The John Birch
Society**

Fax

To: Vance Smith From: Art Thompson
Fax: - Pages: 3 including cover
Phone: - Date: 10/22/00
Re: CC: -

Urgent For Review Please Comment Please Reply Please Recycle

Comments:

Thinking about this, I thought I would put some of these things down on paper for what ever use they may be to you. It is by no means all inclusive.

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G. Vance Smith Letter to the JBS Council...

**G. Vance Smith
2 Systems Drive
Appleton, WI 54914
Ph. 920-733-5000**

November 7, 2005

To Members and Former Members of the Council of The John Birch Society

Dear Gentlemen,

It is my hope that this is the last communication you will receive from me relative to my departure from The John Birch Society's leadership. And I prepare this message so that the record, from my perspective, is made straight.

The past seven weeks have been horrific, to say the least. From amongst a jury of what I thought were true patriots who understood the difference between rule of law and majoritarian democracy, I have been accused, tried, found guilty, and condemned without ever being given a chance to defend myself.

When some sound-thinking Council members were confronted with these issues, they would ask, ♦Have you presented your concerns to Vance?♦ The answer was generally, ♦No, Vance would only deny the allegations, and you know how persuasive he is.♦ Thus, the kangaroo court was being put in place. Homeland Security could not have pulled this off any better.

On several occasions, Mr. Welch began written explanations by stating: ♦If You Want it Straight.♦ In the next few pages, I will do my very best to present the ♦other side of the story♦ as straight and as honestly as I know how.

In June of 1991, I was asked to take the leadership of the Society at a

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Council Meeting held in Chicago. The Executive Committee met in consultation with the Council and chose me to be CEO, Tom Gow to be Vice President, and Jack McManus to be President. That was the correct procedure. That was done in the same way that Mr. Welch had prescribed. It was the way he announced his own replacement in the [April 1983 Bulletin](#). And it was the procedure used each and every time a new leader was appointed ([enclosure 1](#) and [enclosure 2](#)).

Setting the record straight #1

Jack McManus has stated that the Board of Incorporators was, in 1983, going to exercise a corporate legal technicality to make a leadership change. Number one, they didn't do it. And, number two, knowing that Thomas N. Hill was an incorporator, such a foolish departure from Mr. Welch's wishes would have been nixed by him immediately. ([enclosure](#) - Monolithic Structure).

After being appointed in June of 1991, our team gave leadership to the Society that always focused on the words and principles laid down by Robert Welch. As a team, we knew the importance of those principles, and we knew that the Insiders understood the Society's vulnerability if we veered from that correct path.

During the 14 years that I served as CEO, Jack McManus lived in his Wakefield, Massachusetts home. He did some speaking and some writing using the title of President, but he was never involved in the business side of the organization. That went okay until the year 2000.

Setting the record straight #2

But then Jack started speaking at religious conferences where he was both video- and audio-taped. His message on conspiracy and the books he promoted sounded very much like those given at Birch functions. (He was even introduced as president of the Society and publisher of TNA at some of these events.) Except he concluded for these audiences that the real enemies were the Masons and the Jews behind them. Jack is very proud of everything he has ever written, and I'm certain he would happily send you copies of *Know Thine Enemy* and other speeches he gave on those subjects.

When the Society's officers and Executive Committee learned of Jack's newly expressed views and agenda, they became very concerned that the Society's fundamental principles would be compromised, and that individuals like Morris Dees could possibly attack the Society and cause it irreparable damage. Attempts to persuade Jack to modify his non-religious conclusions and cease such public activity were only mildly successful. So with his concurrence we took steps to wind down his role within the Society ([enclosure](#)).

Setting the record straight #3

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I bring this past point up for very good reason. Over this past many years as both assistant publisher and then publisher of The New American, and as publisher of the Bulletin, Tom Gow has been the valiant watchman to see that only correct principles were published. On a number of occasions, he supported Gary Benoit in stopping or changing articles, written by various authors, laced with inappropriate comments on [Masons, Jews, Israeli Lobby, etc.](#) Other contributors were phased out and would-be leaders rejected when it was judged that their extreme views might compromise our mission. With Tom no longer there to give guidance and support to Gary, others had better do so, or the Society's publications could well be reduced to little more than the old ♦Spotlight♦ tabloid.

Exactly seven weeks ago, I learned that a smear campaign had been going on secretly for weeks and possibly months. It was clear that Art Thompson had gone out from our private leadership meetings with messages of fear and frustration. He spoke ill of my leadership, and his style of ♦it♦s just awful♦ gossip encouraged others to complain and commiserate with him. He would then take those stories, based on some truth but with embellishments and distortions, to members of the Council and JBS staff and even some members at large.

Setting the record straight #4 ♦ Art Thompson♦s Ascent to CEO

To his credit, Art Thompson was one of the few staff members willing to move to our Appleton Headquarters. So it was decided to try to keep him in leadership positions. It gradually became clear, however, that while he was able to appreciate problems once they were pointed out to him, he was very short on ideas for solutions and the leadership to implement them. (Though in leadership for several years, there is not a person on the staff today that was hired by Art Thompson.)

During his three years in Appleton, Art worked first as Development Director with poor results. Then, he was placed in charge of the field ♦ again, he came up short. Desperate to get results from leadership, we added more men to the Development Department and tried Art, once again, there. By summer of this year, results were so poor from Art and his team that I suggested he return to his home state of Washington where he could again supervise Coordinators.

Art was not pleased with the move, but his wife was thrilled with it. The move took place. What I did not know was that during the move, Art was simultaneously orchestrating his ♦Vance is a terrible leader♦ campaign. And, sadly for the JBS, it worked. Today he is your CEO.

Setting the record straight #5 ♦ Steve Bonta♦s resignation

Steve is a brilliant man. He did a wonderful job in helping to get RWU off the ground. He and I worked well together in some areas ♦ the ♦Reclaiming America♦ seminars, etc. ♦ but we clashed when it came

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to the administration side of Steve♦s responsibilities. As a result of the latter issue, Steve quit. Within a month he had picked up and moved from the area.

In his letter of resignation ([enclosure](#)), and on messages sent to me by him on voicemail, Steve expressed a desire to have an amicable separation. He also desired to maintain a working relationship with both RWU and TNA.

It was several months, and only after others agitated him, that Steve jumped into the ♦get Vance♦ fracas. Part of the reason, as I understand it, is that I was accused of saying something negative about his character. That rumor, spread by others, simply was not true. I will explain.

The week after Steve resigned, Jack McManus replaced him at the Pennsylvania youth camp. The following week Jack called me to report on his camp experience. He started to tell me about a conversation he had with a young lady. I stopped him and asked him if I could record his message. He agreed. The young lady told Jack that as far back as November 2004, Steve was already talking about leaving RWU for various reasons, including concerns about location relative to his parents and his desire to go to law school. I did play the message to the Executive Committee and a few others for the purpose of demonstrating that besides Steve♦s unhappiness in working with me he had other reasons, as well, to resign from his position with RWU. There was nothing in that taped message maligning anyone. Impugning Steve♦s character by suggestion, innuendo, or insinuation did not happen.

Setting the record straight #6

Sixteen members of the Executive Committee and Council petitioned Jack McManus, Larry Waters, and John Fall to postpone their October 21st Board of Incorporators meeting for just eight days so that the matter could be discussed, both sides heard, and thus adhere to correct, long-established succession procedures. The three of them refused. They held their meeting and changed the basic leadership succession to where a smear campaign can topple any leader in the future. Very handy for the Insiders ♦ I♦ll explain.

Both in the Blue Book and his subsequent writings, Mr. Welch emphasized that he had chosen the monolithic/authoritarian structure for the Society because it was the only structure that could measure up to the challenge of providing effective leadership against the Conspiracy. Without that structure, he knew that the Society would not be able to maintain its intractable purpose and focus. He wanted no part of democratic organizations that could be readily neutralized by spreading dissension. The already mentioned enclosures demonstrate clearly that he would regularly reinforce the importance of that structure throughout his tenure at the top. That structure is, as of October 21, 2005, now gone!

Setting the record straight #7

While the hue and cry of the gossip mill was, ♦If Vance is not forced out immediately, many more good people will quit,♦ the reality is that much of the real staff leadership did leave. I was forced to resign on October 21st and I asked no one else to do so. Other top leaders, Tom Gow included, did resign simply because they could not honestly support people who would behave in such a manner.

Although the hue and cry was that Vance was the problem, the agitators clearly were determined to have their way regardless of the cost to the organization. Recognizing that their views likely would not convince the men on the Executive Committee, who were sensitive to other and larger issues, they mounted a simultaneous attack on the Executive Committee as being in my pocket. These men also were denied the opportunity to defend themselves, and with such irresponsible diplomacy several key financial supporters were recklessly alienated.

One of these donors, knowing of our financial shortfall, pledged to bring a check for \$100,000 to Orlando. His plan was to put it on the table and challenge others there to dig deep and join with him in making a financial sacrifice. The dissidents knew of his gift and fundraising plan as they dismissed it and him out of hand.

* * *

There have been several other falsehoods and distortions spread about in recent weeks, and some were reported to me from the recent meetings in Orlando. I will conclude this lengthy missive by bullet-pointing some of them and ♦setting the record straight♦ below:

#8 Charge: ♦Vance was unfair in his management style. His great sin was ♦micro-management.♦ ♦

Like the eight years of the ♦conservative♦ Reagan administration when the Birch Society was in constant turmoil, the ♦conservative♦ Bush administration has dealt a difficult hand to the Society. Anyone reading this letter can ask: How many people have I recruited? How many have come to my home for video presentations? How many prospects have I taken to Birch speeches or meetings? Asked honestly, most of you can report very little. It is a very difficult time. And when times are tough, we too must be tough.

Yes, there were many demands put on Art Thompson and the fundraising team. Under his leadership, fundraising was down considerably and Art was feeling pressure from me. The same can be said about demands I put on other managers. Did I ever step over the line? Did I demonstrate frustration when confronted with poor and lackluster attempts to get results? Yes, from time to time I did. Did I

apologize to any offended when I did step over the line when those things happened? Yes. Did I fire those who did not measure up in their assignments? No, I put them in other assignments where they had greater opportunity to succeed.

In retrospect, however, and even though I♦ve been accused by those orchestrating this present coup of being a head-hopping Attila the Hun, I am probably guilty of being too lenient. There are some on the JBS staff, because of age, burnout, and just plain inability who, after being reassigned, never have stepped up and carried their weight. Part of my rationale was Mr. Welch♦s often used quote, ♦We must cut the suit out of the cloth available.♦ Nevertheless, as a responsible leader, and based solely on poor performance, some staff members throughout the years should have been asked to resign.

Twice a year, senior field staff met in Appleton. The senior field staff consisted of the Director of Field Operations and the Regional Field Directors, the Director of Development and the fundraisers. At those meetings, charts prepared by Jeff LeClaire and David Lewis were shown to those men. And goals to improve were discussed and accepted. (The charts used in those meetings were similar to those shown to the Council in Orlando.)

#9 Charge: ♦Vance has nearly bankrupted the Society and has stolen its membership lists.♦

We have recently heard from a few RWU donors who have expressed great concern. They were told by fundraisers that Vance, after resigning from his position with the Society, had taken all of the JBS funds and transferred them to RWU, and that he had stolen the JBS membership lists.

Number one, when our leadership team left on Friday, October 21st, the Society was, and has been for many years, current on all of its financial obligations. All salaries were paid every two weeks, all field expenses were current and up-to-date as they had been for years and years, and medical claims and accounts payable were current. (I did keep a copy of a recent financial report in order to verify these facts in the weeks and months ahead.)

No, there were no funds transferred to RWU. The accounting departments of both organizations know the truth of that.

No, I categorically deny taking any membership or TNA subscription lists. Those charges are as false as the early smear allegations.

While disappointed in their behavior, it may be helpful to RWU that fundraisers have made such outrageous statements. There are laws relative to slander and defamation. If a lawsuit proves necessary, episodes like those mentioned will be helpful. By having donors (third parties) that can be deposed relative to slanderous statements, we will

be able to protect future RWU donors as the university moves forward to become a great educational institution.

#10 Charge: RWU is being stolen from JBS.

The John Birch Society is a Massachusetts corporation. RWU, a California corporation, has always had a completely separate corporate structure, and the present JBS group has no claim to it. We have a wonderful new RWU director, Dr. Lisa St. Louis, as well as a very competent and devoted staff. RWU plans to continue to build its online university program and to advance the cause of freedom. It has every intention of working in harmony with JBS as long as the latter does not in any way compromise the mission stated clearly by Robert Welch. If it does veer, as discussed earlier, RWU will cut its ties completely.

When Tom Gow, Paul Smith, and Kathy Braun resigned from the JBS staff on October 21st, we all moved to the RWU headquarters, thus keeping a very good leadership team intact. For 14 ♦ years, I have served as the CEO for RWU, and it is my intention to continue in that capacity. While a percentage of my time at JBS was allocated to RWU supervision, I have taken no salary check from RWU. And it is my intention to continue for the foreseeable future in the same manner.

(When I resigned as the JBS CEO, I signed a separation contract authorized by the existing Board of Directors for salary continuation of the same duration as had been afforded the three or four previous CEOs. They had each served no more than three years while I had been at the post 14 ♦ years. Therefore, the agreement consisting of the same number of weeks of full salary is more than fair. While JBS honors that contract, I will not draw a salary from RWU.)

#11 Charge: Vance foolishly spent \$115,000 on lawyers to reclaim a JBS inheritance relative to the DeMille estate instead of cooperating with other plaintiffs.

The John Birch Society had been notified that it and a number of other institutions had been named as beneficiaries in the will of a generous member who had just passed away. We were also told that a relative of the deceased had manipulated himself into being made estate executor. As such, he had taken steps to disinherit many of the beneficiaries including the JBS.

In counsel with others, we did retain the services of a lawyer, Mitch Lathrop, with the law firm of Duane Morris. We did pay him nearly \$65,000 to fight for a \$350,000 settlement due us. The agreement with him was that his fees paid before the settlement would not exceed \$75,000. Also, he told us that he was most confident he could retrieve all of our legal fees from the errant estate executor when this matter was finally settled. This case is still pending. The horror stories told to the Council in Orlando were as confused and erroneous as the other tales that were invented to do so much harm.

* * *

All is up to you. There is simply no one but you, individually and collectively, who can or will step up to deal with these critical problems. Even though the present three ruling members of the Board of Incorporators have stated that you, the Council, have no vote, the opposite is true. You have the 47-year JBS history, as well as the respect of members and staff. You definitely have a ♦vote♦ and an important say in not only the future of JBS, but, more importantly, the future of our nation and, yes, even the future of our civilization.

We are fighting a godless and ruthless enemy. A Conspiracy that has already enslaved most of the world♦s population. A Conspiracy that has encouraged, if not orchestrated, the deaths of over 350 million people in the 20th century alone. A Conspiracy that currently presents the American people with a ♦conservative president and Congress♦ who have done more to destroy our nation and personal freedoms than any before them.

As the mantle bearers, what kind of ♦dynamic leadership♦ are you going to insist upon? Will you get it from Jack McManus who has seized an opportunity to appoint himself the ♦top man♦?

During the past 14♦ years, Jack refused to move to Appleton where he was needed. Has that changed? Will he now move to Appleton? It will not be difficult to guess that answer. In recent years, Jack has been unwilling to develop the new skills needed to reach broader audiences. Will that change? I doubt it. Robert Welch said, ♦we mean business every step of the way.♦ I don♦t believe you♦ll see Jack demonstrate that any time soon.

Mr. Welch also stated, ♦It is the leadership that is most demanding, most exacting of its followers, not the one which asks the least and is afraid to ask more, that achieves really dedicated support.♦

Will it be possible for the Society to succeed with leadership that does not require the field men to have goals, results areas, prescribed zones to work, etc.? Will soft, namby-pamby leadership work in fighting a desperate war for freedom? Again, you will have to decide that.

So, if you want it straight, good Council members, start by recalling that all of you were selected to the Council because you were considered men of dignity and character. Some of you were appointed to this august council by our founder Robert Welch. You know and understand that The John Birch Society was established on sound principles that, if left in place, would ensure its effectiveness in the battle for freedom for decades to come.

Again, all is now up to you. You have the power and influence to restore

the original organizational structure essential to the Society if it is going to rout the Conspiracy and preserve the Constitution. You can, with your influence and demands, take back the organization from the three individuals who have brazenly stolen it through a backdoor legal technicality. You can then, using long established and practiced procedures, select and put in place new leadership who will lead the Society correctly and stay focused on the principles laid down by Robert Welch.

I stated ♦new♦ leadership because I am in no way suggesting that I be reinstated. There are, however, others you can select who do not bring baggage or incompetence to the table who have the experience and ability to give leadership to the Society. Over the years, members of the Executive Committee insisted that I give them progress reports on a few people who were being prepared to replace me when I would step down or if something unforeseen should happen to me. They know well that competent people were identified and being groomed for the position.

You, and only you, can put the Society back on its proper track. Or you can do nothing and take responsibility for the consequences. It really is up to you.

May you have inspiration from Heaven as you deal with these most critical issues. And may we all pray for God♦s blessings in these perilous times to save The John Birch Society that it may continue its role in helping good patriots preserve freedom.

Sincerely,
G. Vance Smith

cc: Selected individuals

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March 22, 2006

To Members of The Council of The John Birch Society (Copies to: JBS Building Contributors, JBS Field Staff)

Dear Gentlemen,

Because of the recent exchange of letters between Art Thompson and Wayne Rickert, I am sending this letter to those who have received that correspondence.

Please, take the time to read this letter and to study the enclosures (available upon request). Try, with me, to understand Art's motives in first attacking Jack and then later undermining me and eventually the Executive Committee. It should be very helpful to all genuinely interested in understanding what has been going on, and why.

There is so very much at stake. I will present to you material that in the past only the Executive Committee, the JBS Board of Directors, and a few in leadership of the Society ever needed to know. It was my hope that there would never be a need for this material to be distributed, but, if the Society is to be saved, the time has come.

Art's Sudden About-face

On March 8, 2006, I received a phone call from Rusty Barlow, a longtime member of The John Birch Society in Idaho. Rusty said he had just returned from a meeting with Art Thompson and Tom Rice. During the visit, Rusty asked Art plainly:

◆ Art, do you feel comfortable with the statements Jack McManus has made about the Jews? ◆ Art Thompson replied:

◆ I don't have any problems at all with what Jack said. Vance Smith has taken Jack's words out of context to make Jack appear to be anti-

Fundraising Letter

► [Wayne, Walt, & Keith Respond to Appleton "Inmates"](#)

► [Tom Gow Rebutts Takeover Team's Spin on Coup](#)

► [Paradigm UnShift Still Needed](#)

► [Tom Gow Calls for a Paradigm "UnShift" at JBS](#)

► [Wayne, Walt, Keith Pledge to Continue Fighting the Insiders, With or Without JBS](#)

► [Thompson Can't Take the Heat, Distorts the Record](#)

► [JBS Veteran Mike Casey Asks Jack McManus to Do the Right Thing](#)

► [JBS Councilmember Allen Bubolz Brushed Off by Art Thompson](#)

► [Call to Action by Former Executive Committee Members](#)

► [Anarchy in Appleton](#)

► [Tom Gow Tackles Incorporator Claims](#)

► [Mike Thomas, Former Idaho Coordinator, Shows Support for Wayne, Walt & Keith](#)

Semitic. He has taken video presentations by Jack and linked small clips, again out of context, and threatened to use the video against Jack and the Society.♦

This reflects an interesting change in Art♦'s thinking about Jack. During the past six years, Art has continually expressed serious concern over what Art has referred to as Jack♦'s ♦anti-Semitic dialog.♦ In fact, it was Art Thompson who first brought the matter to my attention.

In the late spring of 2000, Art Thompson approached me with information he had received concerning Jack♦'s speaking activities to non-Birch religious groups. Because Jack had already sent copies of his speeches, tapes, and videos to selected JBS members (Joe Maurer having been one of them), Art was certain that Jack♦'s material was now being broadcast far and wide. Art expressed great concern that, if not checked, Jack would surely destroy the Society. Art then arranged for me to receive a number of videos, brochures, and related material that would prove his case.

Later, on October 22, 2000, Art sent me a [faxed memo](#) from his home in Washington wherein he outlined various strategies that could be used to deal with Jack. In that memo, discussed in more detail below, Art even proposed that we get Jack to retire because of Jack♦'s expressed views on Jews and Masons.

Despite his grave concerns about Jack♦'s activities, Art would later hypocritically change his position on Jack. Why? The reason seems obvious: Jack, as a key member of the Board of Incorporators, was essential to Art♦'s aspirations to be CEO. In an effort to appeal to Jack♦'s over-sized ego, Art must have let Jack know that he would once again enjoy the title of President if he used his position as an Incorporator to have Vance removed.

Jack♦'s Version

Jack McManus, now on the spot, has responded to questions from members about his speeches to religious gatherings with a story similar to Art♦'s latest denials. In a January letter to a member, rather than providing the member with the requested copy of Jack♦'s speech, Jack attempted to dismiss the whole episode in part with these words, ♦In the talk, I made passing reference to many viewpoints that had always been held by the Catholic Church, one of which is that adherence to Judaism is deadly as far as eternal salvation is concerned. This, of course, is a view shared by Christians of numerous other denominations. But it is not a position ever taken by The John Birch Society which is not a religious organization.♦

In other words, Jack is now suggesting that he has done nothing wrong at all. At a religious conference, he merely repeated a commonly held religious viewpoint, not necessarily even advocating it as his own. So we might ask, what rational Birchers could object ♦ if that♦'s all they were

► Wayne Rickert
Takes Glenn
Schmitz to the
Woodshed

► Tom Gow
Responds to
Report in August
JBS Bulletin

► Rickert
Confronts
Eisenberg (cont'd)

► Wayne Rickert
Refutes David
Eisenberg

► Rusty Barlow &
G. Vance Smith
confront John F.
McManus

► RWU Appeal
Letter Sets Record
Straight about JBS

► Concerned
Members Speak
Out

► My Initial
Message

► My Second
Appeal to John Fall

► G. Vance Smith
Ltr 3-21-06

► VOICEMAIL
CLIPS: Art
Thompson's and
Other JBS Leaders'
Concerns About
John McManus

► VOICEMAIL
CLIPS: Bryan
Turner on Art
Crino's coup
involvement since
April 2005

► Wayne Rickert
Expose Art
Thompson

told?

Time for the Truth

There♦s an old saying, ♦If you don♦t quit lying about me, I♦m going to start telling the truth about you.♦ In the face of convincing, but misleading denials from Jack and Art, it is time to tell the whole, incontrovertible truth. For I believe, as I wrote you earlier, that this issue demands your immediate attention. What I am going to describe is documented in several letters, documents, audio and videotapes, but I will enclose with this letter only a few items. All of them, however, are available to you upon request.

Before we go there, however, let♦s try to understand just what it was that John F. McManus had been accused of, what the former JBS leadership team had done to deal with their concerns about the matter, and whether the situation constituted a serious concern relative to the future of the Society.

David Eisenberg Speaks

Jack is also circulating a letter written by David Eisenberg to Walt Ruckel. In it, David shows his forgiving nature by stating:

♦Some incorrect accusations have been made concerning the apparent anti-Semitism of John McManus. Please be assured that, as a Jew, I have a long time ago satisfied myself that statements made by John have been mis-interpreted by some folks who wish to lay the claim of anti-Semitism on John♦s head. I have had considerable correspondence with John on this subject, and find the claims to be without merit. In fact, John did revise that one speech to my satisfaction, and we have remained very good friends mutually dedicated to The John Birch Society and the task before us.♦

Two main points in David♦s letter:

1. Yes, David was correct when he stated there are ♦some folks who wish to lay the claim of anti-Semitism on John♦s head.♦ And, in fact, David Eisenberg was the first to do so when he stated in his postscript to his July 19, 2000 letter to Jack: ♦How can we say that JBS is not anti-Semitic when the president speaks thus?♦

2. David also remarked, ♦In fact, John did revise that one speech to my satisfaction.♦ Well, even for friendship♦s sake, getting Jack to revise ♦that one speech♦ does not alter the fact that Jack wrote, spoke, and videotaped those statements that have been distributed by Jack and his friends at these conferences. Moreover, getting caught and being forced to change one♦s words in one speech, does not mean Jack♦s beliefs or proclivities have changed in the least.

► [Art Thompson
Goes After John
McManus](#)

► [My Reply to
John Fall's 3/06 Ltr](#)

► [My Reply to JBS
Staff Reaction](#)

► [My Comments
on Specific Claims
to JBS Staff
Reaction](#)

► [JBS Staff Reacts
to this Website](#)

► [G. Vance Smith
Ltr to the JBS
Council](#)

► [Tom Gow Memo
Regarding JBS
Building Restrictive
Covenant](#)

► [Additional
Supporting
Documentation](#)

On July 27, 2000, David wrote to me, and, as you can see, his opinions were very different. Below are some of his thoughts:

◆ Mr. McManus says in his letter of July 25th, ◆ I hope that no harm comes to the Society because of my ill-considered outburst. ◆ I suspect that the speech was put down on paper and used by the speaker at the March 24th engagement. If this is true, then, the ◆ ill-considered outburst ◆ was a planned event. This bothers me, since the implication is that those words represent true feelings with respect to Jews and the Catholic Church as viewed by Mr. McManus.

◆ Hoping that no damage has been done to the Society doesn't solve the problem which has been created. While I don't know for sure, I do suspect that damage has been done, and the results not yet realized. We are responsible for our acts (unless our name is Clinton). Mr. McManus is responsible for any damage coming as a result of this unfortunate speech. ◆

◆ But, this ◆ outburst ◆ projected from his being, to a gathering of his co-religionists, causes me to feel that irrational anti-Jewish thoughts are a part of the man when he addresses attacks against the Catholic Church. None of which is a part of The John Birch Society.

◆ What makes this most difficult to accept, is the fact that he is the President of The John Birch Society, and no matter where he may speak, he is recognized as a spokesman for the Society. In this position, he has no personal statements to make, even if he would first set up some disclaimer.

◆ The letter of July 25th contains no assurance that this ◆ ill-considered outburst ◆ won't happen again. ◆

In another letter to Jack dated August 18, 2000, David continues to try and settle his feelings toward Jack. I quote:

◆ You refer to the ◆ ill-considered outburst. ◆ Jack, you composed your speech with those words of associating Jews with Masons. I don't feel that this was an ◆ outburst, ◆ but rather a prepared part of your speech. Was it ◆ ill-considered ◆ because of your position with The John Birch Society, or was it ◆ ill-considered ◆ with respect to Jews? My feeling is that you claim ◆ ill-considered ◆ reflecting your position with the Society. This leaves me to think that your, sometimes irrational, defense of the Catholic Church, is no different from the manner in which the Anti-defamation League (ADL) ◆ defends ◆ Judaism; in a manner less than true. ◆

◆ However, I cannot understand the ◆ outburst ◆ unless there is some very real anti-semitism within your character. ◆

◆ If harm comes to the Society as a result of your ◆ ill-considered ◆

comments, I shall be very unhappy. I have had to explain to all too many of my co-religionists for too many years, that JBS is not a danger to us, but rather a defense against our assured destruction. You, in this speech, have harmed my credibility. If there has been mass distribution of this speech, I would be afraid of the results.♦

Unfortunately, there was more than this one speech ♦ there were several. Even Art Thompson points out in his [memo](#) (which I will describe in more detail later) that Jack McManus had been giving talks such as these for at least a decade. The most damage done by Jack was in his speeches, ♦Know Thine Enemy,♦ delivered at the Saint Joseph Forum, and ♦Conspiracy Against the Catholic Church,♦ delivered at the Saint Benedict Center. And there may have been other venues unknown to us where Jack presented his speeches and combined his *ostensible* Church views with his Birch views.

Regardless of whether Jack is truly anti-Semitic in his heart, he has an uncontrollable, irresponsible ego and has often had to be restrained from speaking before groups with whom The John Birch Society would not want to be associated. The danger to the Society is the same in any event.

When Tom Gow, Jack, and I were given our positions to preside over the Society in June 1991, The Executive Committee counseled Jack about his ego and cautioned him to carefully weigh his words. Some of Jack♦s words in the past, thoughtlessly expressed, had offended La Rita Quinn (organizer of the very successful Colorado Rocky Mountain Rally) and others and had caused the Society embarrassment. Even though Tom Hill had cautioned us to never make Jack president, the Executive Committee decided to take the risk. While Clyde Lewis, Joe Grinnan, Phil Binzel, Wayne Rickert and Walt Ruckel wanted to give Jack the leadership opportunity, they were also aware of his tendency to ♦speak out of school.♦ Unfortunately, Jack let them down.

Jack Wouldnt Stop

Moving on, dozens ♦ if not hundreds ♦ of hours went into trying to work through all this with Jack. Tom Gow invested more time than any of us in corresponding and sending lengthy memos to Jack in an effort to reason with him. And finally, because we were still disappointed in Jack♦s unwillingness to take responsibility for his actions, we put in file a lengthy letter to Jack reprimanding him in the matter. That letter of July 31, 2000 was signed by Tom Gow and me, and it was accompanied by a letter signed by JBS board members, Gary Benoit and Jim Toft, attesting to their concerns.

We were in hopes that this was all finally settled and behind us. But the matter didn♦t stay resolved very long. Much to our consternation, in the spring of 2002, Jack once again allowed himself to be put on the agenda as a speaker at the St. Benedict Center where several of his previous speeches had been videotaped.

When this was brought to my attention ♦ and I believe once more by Art Thompson ♦ I met with Jack and confronted him. He apologized for breaking the trust, but assured me that he had reviewed the program and was certain this time that no speeches would be given on the topic of the ♦Jewish♦ conspiracy. Nevertheless, as Jack had already recognized the need to distance himself from this group knowing full well the ♦guilt-by-association♦ consequences, I asked him to cancel his appearance. He said that would cause him to lose face and would be too difficult for him to do, so we decided on a business trip out of the country (to Canada) to provide him with a respectable excuse.

Nevertheless, that was the last straw. I sent off a letter dated July 3, 2002 to Jack. The Executive Committee, which included two traditional Catholics, Joe Grinnan and Dr. Phil Binzel ♦ one of Jack♦s staunchest defenders ♦ along with Executive Committee members Rickert, Ruckel, and Van Buskirk, and JBS officers, agreed that Jack could not be reined in and that action must be taken. It was decided that we had no choice other than to quietly move Jack to the backburner and to eventually remove his title as president of the Society. That, of course, finally happened in October of 2003.

Now, there are those who are saying, ♦So, Jack made a little mistake. He fixed all that a long time ago.♦ Well, Jack has not fixed anything and he has not changed in the least. Again in 2005, Jack spoke to these groups ♦ the same groups that in the past had featured, besides others of the same ilk, anti-Jewish author/lecturer Paul Fisher. And again, after all the trouble he had caused in the past, Jack did not seek permission from anyone to do so. Jack would soon learn of the secret coup taking place and undoubtedly realized that, for his part in it, he would likely be president again and no longer held to account. For this time ♦ with the all-powerful title of ♦Chairman of the Board of Incorporators♦ ♦ he would report to no one.

Art Thompson Exposes Jack McManus♦ ♦Anti-Semitic dialog♦
You have already received from Wayne Rickert the [memo](#) Art Thompson wrote to me (dated October 22, 2000) outlining the possible ramifications of Jack♦s actions. In it Art lays out possible scenarios of repercussions from Jack♦s speeches. And he comments about what might happen if any of the following: Alan Stang, Joseph Maurer, Richmond Weathers, Don Julius, Marty Ohlson (Art♦s new re-hire), all dissidents from the past, were to link up with Morris Dees and join in on the attack.

Under ♦Possibilities,♦ Art Thompson lists:

♦McManus launches the attack.

1. Joins Maurer
2. Stays ♦independent but goes to [incorporators](#)♦

(Wow! Art obviously knew of Jack♦'s incorporators ♦trump card♦ ♦ a card that would later cause great harm to the Society. As you now know, it was played by three of the five incorporators fully aware of Jack♦'s anti-Jewish remarks.)

Under the heading of ♦What do we do?♦ Art suggests:

Regardless of the direction, most of the below should be done ASAP.

A. **Put on a video short clips of the various speeches by McManus.**

1. Show how he is introduced. If by ♦Berkman♦ then the fact that he refers in the body of the speech that he refers to himself as *representing* The JBS. (Does this talk represent the opinion of The JBS?)

B. Transcribe same plus any written material pertinent.

C. Document the attempt to get McManus to do the right thing.
(By you & T. Gow.)

1. In the process, point out the subterfuge of St. Joseph♦'s being the first incident. It wasn't. **It has been going on for at least 3 ♦ years, at least with the anti-Semitic dialog.**
2. Point out McManus has for well over 10 years been out speaking for and to Catholic organizations as the President of The JBS with most of this info on our nickel. (It has not been uncommon that he arranges these talks while in the area while on JBS business let alone the special trips taken to do the above ♦ to private individuals at first.)

D. **Try to get McManus to resign** as a retirement move. He is already collecting social security.

There is no question what Art felt about Jack♦'s ♦anti-Semitic dialog.♦ And, of course, this ♦looking out for the Society♦ ingratiated him with us and helped him secure an office in the Appleton headquarters. Art would later, and only Heaven knows his motivation, orchestrate a leftist-styled smear campaign against me and eventually even against the Executive Committee.

Art Thompson pulls others into a smear campaign and coup

The procedure was textbook. Art took leaders and managers aside to sow seeds of discontent. The Bush years, like the Reagan years in the 1980s, were proving very difficult for the Society. Because membership, chapter, and financial results were down considerably, there was a great deal of stress in the organization. Staff leaders in the field and in the

office were expected to implement solid management principles to ensure the best results possible. And, needless to say, as the CEO, I was feeling much of that stress and was applying much of the pressure ♦ not always a real nice guy. Then, Art taking other managers aside (office and field), was able to pull negative comments from them. He convinced several that essential management systems were really ♦micro-management♦ on the part of Vance. Then, when he was successful in getting some to commiserate with him, he would pass those comments along to others, especially his long-time friend Cliff Wasem.

Cliff, who two years earlier had unsuccessfully campaigned for ♦Art for President,♦ then apparently spent dozens of hours over several months lining up the opposition to Vance Smith with Council members and with what he referred to as ♦senior staff.♦ As recently as two weeks before this letter was written, Cliff was still bragging about his efforts to ♦pull this off♦ by lining up the opposition to Vance and the Executive Committee.

Early on, Executive Committee member Art Crino was pulled into the fray. Then Art Crino, behind the backs of his fellow Executive Committee members, retailed his allegations to all who would listen. He admitted to field staff member Bryan Turner that he had been engaged secretly in this effort since April 2005. Then, realizing that he had misspoken, he told Bryan Turner he would deny the statement he had made earlier. In other words, five months before any of this came to the attention of his fellow Executive Committee members or myself, Art Crino was working to remove us. His reward, as you well know, was to be elected by Jack and his band of incorporators as ♦Chairman of the Board of Directors.♦

(We have been told that the removal of Art Crino from the Executive Committee is what convinced JBS Incorporator John Fall to allow Jack to hold his nefarious incorporators meeting on October 21st. I find myself scratching my head over this issue. Would any of you, if you were an Executive Committee member, like Wayne, Walt, or Keith, be okay about a colleague on your committee working to subvert the decisions of, and undermine confidence in, the authority of that committee? I would hope not. Would you want him removed from your committee? I would hope so.)

As with any Leftist smear campaign to topple a government, the spotlight was all on the alleged abuses and inadequacies of G. Vance Smith. I suspect there was little investigation or discussion of the inadequacies of the proposed alternatives. Mr. Welch would have been appalled, I believe, at this approach to choosing the Society♦s leader.

Let♦s look a little closer at the rewards to those who led the campaign. As mentioned, Art Crino was made ♦Chairman of the Board,♦ and Cliff Wasem was elevated to a now-emasculated Executive Committee. And two of Art Thompson♦s struggling fundraisers, both in their 70s, were

promoted. One, for his part in the coup, was appointed a full vice president of fundraising, while the other, who had been reassigned because he failed earlier in the job, was again appointed as Director of Field Activities. Obviously, leadership in both the field and fundraising departments is essential to the Society♦s success.

So, the question is, what are you as members of the Council going to do about these problems?

Only you can use your influence with other Council members to force Jack to resign from all leadership positions ♦ especially as a member of the JBS Board of Incorporators. He has certainly proven himself unworthy to hold that position. Only you can put pressure on Art Thompson to resign.

Only you can insist that Art Crino and Cliff Wasem be removed from the Council and any elected positions they presently hold.

And, only you can insist on what Don Fotheringham is advocating ♦ that the Executive Committee be exonerated and reinstated exactly the way it was in mid-October 2005. Then, allow the Executive Committee, in conference with the Council members who were serving in that period of time, to hear any legitimate complaints and deal with those matters that, over the years, they♦ve proven themselves so capable of handling.

Council members, first of all, must be good Birchers, and you are the Council members. You hold a high and important trust with the general membership. You are not ♦window dressing♦ as some have stated, you were appointed to be ♦pullers at the oars and not passengers in the boat.♦ Stand up, speak out, and do something.

It is now up to you. Even though the former leadership had kept them under wraps, the recent events have brought the views of Jack McManus relative to the Jewish religion and Masonry out in to the open. If the Society is going to move forward without this ♦anti♦ baggage, Jack simply must be removed from all JBS leadership positions. Doing so will once again demonstrate to the world that The John Birch Society is focused on principles and is free from any justified accusations of bigotry.

Not only the Society, our entire nation is in deep trouble. There is a very real enemy, a ruthless Conspiracy that wishes to enslave all mankind that needs to be dealt with. Plus, the extremely important campaign to stop the FTAA is being neglected, and the equally important activity to stop the North American Community has gone nowhere since October when Tom Gow and I were forced to leave. The Insiders are moving forward and they must be thrilled with what is happening ♦ and what is not happening ♦ in The John Birch Society.

It♦s time to check this deplorable situation and go to work! Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss the matter further.

Sincerely,
G. Vance Smith

To obtain the following support documentation please email your request
to [Kathy Braun](#).

Smith letter to McManus, 7/03/02

(2) Conference flyers, 2005

Benoit and Toft letter, 8/03/00

Eisenberg letter, 7/19/00

Eisenberg letter, 7/27/00

Eisenberg letter, 8/18/00

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Don Fotheringham

www.donfoth.com

December 22, 2006

Dear Friends,

On November 29, 2006, Art Thompson sent out what appeared to be a desperate fundraising letter to JBS members. In it he made several statements clearly intended to deflect growing member concern. A number of individuals have asked us to respond in a general letter to what they perceive as inaccurate information. And, since Art's letter contains so many fabrications, we are pleased to set the record straight.

In his letter, Art Thompson stated:

◆ Organizationally, we are making changes in ways to bring the Society back into line with Robert Welch's wishes.

◆ We have expanded the Executive Committee (EC) back up to seven members. It had fallen to three Councilmen and Vance Smith by October 1st of last year. We have changed the bylaws back to what Mr. Welch wanted by having the Board of Directors in the EC rather than a Board made up of employees, as had been instituted in the 1990s.◆

There are two very serious problems in this misrepresentation from Art Thompson: 1) Art is not telling the truth; and 2) Jack McManus, Nat Adamson, Glenn Schmitz, and other veteran members of the Council are doing and saying nothing when they know full well that what Art has written is misleading and un-true.

The truth is that the original JBS Board of Directors and Board of Incorporators were constituted by Mr. Welch, his wife, Marian, his secretary, and a few other intimate and trusted friends. Those boards were put together for the sole purpose of satisfying Massachusetts corporation laws only. Mr. Welch explained in *The Blue Book*, and to the members in various *Bulletins*, that the JBS succession procedures had to be handled by a carefully selected Executive Committee and Council, not by the corporate world ◆democratic processes.◆

In 1986, a Council member, J. R. Smeed, convinced the members of the Executive Committee to vote themselves onto the Board of Directors.

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Thus, the period from 1986 through 1993 was the only time Executive Committee members wore the hats of Directors.

Executive Committee and Council members heard JBS general counsel, George Christodoulo, warn them in a 1993 Council meeting in Salt Lake City that a terrible mistake had been made. He explained that the Executive Committee, many of them heavy financial contributors, were leaving themselves open and vulnerable to lawsuits, if they acted as directors, and that the Society would do well to go back to the procedures originally put in place by Robert Welch ♦ which, by the way, we did immediately.

Art♦'s letter states that they have changed the bylaws. Since no change in the bylaws was necessary to elect whomever they wanted, and, in fact, they have had Executive Committee members on their Board of Directors for many months, members should ask what were the REAL changes they made to the bylaws?

For example, under their new bylaws and their new practice, does not the Board of Incorporators, made up of employees, still choose the Board of Directors? And are these the same or different employees who now choose members of the Executive Committee? Can the B of I overrule the Council in appointing men to the Executive Committee?

Obviously, Art is trying to persuade members that he is responsive to the many concerns members have expressed regarding the mutiny he orchestrated last year, which subverted the established structure. But if Art were honest he would have to admit that the same mutinous employees who seized authority from the Executive Committee are still in charge. Instead, Art is offering members a smokescreen of falsehoods and distortions to cover up the fact that he and Jack still have no real accountability. Or have Jack McManus, Larry Waters, and John Fall given up their control of the Board of Incorporators?

Art boasts that there are now seven men on the Executive Committee and that there were only three, plus Vance, in October 2005. The truth is that there were seven members in early August of 2005. Then one passed away in August and another was subsequently removed for his role in helping to orchestrate a coup. After Art♦'s selected date of October 1, as I recall, another stepped down for business reasons. But absent the coup, all of them would have been replaced in the upcoming Executive Committee Meeting on October 29, 2005 in Orlando, Florida. The cited drop was very temporary.

So, the question is: Why did Art Thompson try to deceive the general membership? And why did the others sit quietly and allow him to do so? The answer is simple ♦ because of the truth now being understood by so many of you about the terrible wrongs done to the Society in October 2005. It is obvious that they are all now on the defensive where they feel they must distort the truth in order to justify their wrongs. What a shame!

► [Wayne Rickert](#)

[Takes Glenn Schmitz to the Woodshed](#)

► [Tom Gow Responds to Report in August JBS Bulletin](#)

► [Rickert Confronts Eisenberg \(cont'd\)](#)

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► [VOICEMAIL CLIPS: Art Thompson's and Other JBS Leaders' Concerns About John McManus](#)

► [VOICEMAIL CLIPS: Bryan Turner on Art Crino's coup involvement since April 2005](#)

► [Wayne Rickert Exposes Art Thompson](#)

In his letter, Art also inadvertently highlighted the lack of leadership currently at JBS headquarters with his reference to the Society's lame ♦Determination♦ packet. Art wrote, ♦The packet is a work in progress. Improvements will be made continually, both in content and direction as needs become apparent.♦

For most of us, those apparent needs came into focus at first sight. Several downright factual errors should have been caught before they were printed. We understand that the printing bill for that packet was approximately \$65,000. Add to that the postage, and the ♦Determination♦ packet had to have cost nearly \$100,000.

Incredible! Imagine this kind of expense for a nearly worthless packet at the same time field Coordinators are being laid off! Some ♦work in progress.♦

(As you know, the JBS members have been told for months of the great marketing strides forward engineered by their two new, highly paid marketing directors. Interestingly, they have now added one of those two directors to their ex-employee list.)

In addition, your Society's top man made this comment in his November 29th letter, ♦Nor should you show videos to educate or entertain.♦ Art, we don't show videos to educate? That is news to us. Most of us thought that showing videos and bringing speakers to our communities was done for the specific purpose of education and development of prospects.

There have been many changes at The John Birch Society during the past 14 months. One change that none of us thought we would ever see at JBS is a change in the basic slogan: ♦Truth is our only weapon.♦ Unfortunately, the present leadership and the present Council that support them can no longer see value in that great statement by Robert Welch.

Sincerely,

G. Vance Smith
Chief Executive Officer
Robert Welch University

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JBS Staff React to Member Concerns...

([My Response to JBS Staff React to Member Concerns...](#))

The following is a copy of the letter I received from the JBS staff...

January 31, 2006

Mr. Fotheringham,

Before we send out this letter to the people you have mailed your packets to, we wanted to give you the chance read it, and then if you choose, to retract what you have put in those packets and on your website.

Please inform us of your intentions by 10:00 a.m. (CST), February 1, 2006. You may fax back to our phone number at 920-749-5062, or you may email us at headquarters.

Cordially,

Members of the JBS staff

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[Comments on Specific Claims to JBS Staff Reaction...](#)

Comments on Specific Claims

This attachment addresses specific issues raised in the ♦Local 770♦ letter. It is keyed to specific ♦paragraphs.♦ Click here for my general response to that letter.

CLAIM #1:

♦Mr. Fotheringham is wrong for two reasons: First he claims that the Board of Incorporators was never ♦intended to be anything but a legal fixture for launching the JBS.♦♦

Don F: I am willing to accept that Mr. Welch would later see the Board of Incorporators as a *possible* ultimate backstop should something crazy happen with the Council *and* the leadership of the Society. But he clearly realized that using the Board of Incorporators in this way would also destroy and undermine what he had set up when he developed the Council to believe that it had the responsibility for deciding the succession in leadership.

Mr. Welch put great emphasis on the public procedure he set up for choosing the leadership of the Society. And this process had been used through every leadership change until 2005. The Board of Incorporators had never been involved. Mr. Welch♦s intentions were stated clearly in the April 1983 Bulletin. Under the heading ♦A Very Pleasant Assignment♦ Mr. Welch wrote [emphasis added]:

♦At its meeting in January of this year, the Executive Committee agreed on a proposal which we felt made a lot of sense from many standpoints. Recognizing that one of the functions of the COUNCIL was to select my successor, the Executive Committee decided to present its recommendation to that body of leading Americanists at a special meeting arranged for that purpose.

♦So on the evening of March 11th, one day before our COUNCIL Dinner was to be held in Los Angeles, members of the COUNCIL met in executive session. The recommendation was presented and, after some discussion, the COUNCIL voted unanimously to accept it or, more

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precisely, to designate the following new officers of the Society....

◆ We should point out that it was terribly important not to advise anyone of the recommendation of the Executive Committee until the full COUNCIL had an opportunity to review and consider it on March 11.◆

Clearly, Mr. Welch never intended that the collective judgment of the men on the COUNCIL be routinely replaced by the decision of a few veteran members of his staff.

CLAIM #2:

◆ Mr. Fotheringham is wrong for two reasons: ... Second, he has misquoted and misrepresented what is actually stated in *The Blue Book* as to who selects the successor for the JBS leadership.◆

Don F: Yes, my letter did oversimplify the story. A 1961 edition of *The Blue Book* actually says the Council, not its Executive Committee, was to select the Society's leader. Mr. Welch formed the Council a full year after he formed the Society, and Mr. Welch's comments about the Council's functions were added in a section following his founding speech.

However, shortly after establishing the COUNCIL, Mr. Welch established the Executive Committee of the COUNCIL and gave it the leading role. In the early days of the Society, he met monthly with this select group. Mr. Welch's comments in the April 1983 Bulletin, quoted earlier, make clear this development of the role of the Executive Committee.

CLAIM #3:

◆ For the record, John Fall, who is the last member of the Board of Incorporators to have been personally appointed to that position 35 years ago by Robert Welch has stated the following facts: Mr. Fall also added that ◆ the Board was not expected to act very often, but that it should do so only under extreme circumstances.◆◆

I have no reason to doubt what Mr. Fall says Mr. Welch told him. But I do not think the circumstances in October 2005 were of that extreme nature, for no one claims that the leadership of the Society had strayed from Mr. Welch's purposes or principles.

The Society was not even facing a financial crisis. It was facing an internal whispering crisis, ignited by a few disgruntled employees who were unhappy with the leader and most particularly about how they were being managed.

Two members of the staff, with the support of one former staffer, voted to appoint themselves to the positions of leadership, answerable, in effect, only to themselves. Who can replace them now should they prove to be incompetent?

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Cranking up the rusty wheels of the Board on October 21 was a judgment call by Fall, Waters and McManus. In one sense, extreme circumstances did exist. For unless the Board acted immediately, the latter two (Waters and McManus) would never have been able to take over the organization. That is the reason why they would not wait even eight days for the Executive Committee to meet with the rest of the Council and why three of our most valued veteran members of the Executive Committee resigned.

CLAIM #4:

◆ **Mr. Fall is not alone in his assessment as to the true purpose of the Board of Incorporators ... then-Vice President Tom Gow (and Board of Incorporators member) stated the following:**◆

The ◆Local 770◆ letter puts up a strawman. No one disputes what Tom Gow stated so well in the quoted letter. The Board of Incorporators does have a legal basis for doing what it did. That is not the issue that needs to be raised. The real issue, which demands the attention of every member, is the serious failures of judgment and responsibility to maintain the structure of control Mr. Welch put it place. A jury may have the authority to vote a particular defendant guilty of murder in the first degree, regardless of the evidence or case, but that does not mean that such a verdict would always be responsible merely because it had the authority.

CLAIM #5:

◆ **The Board of Incorporators acted exactly as it was supposed to: it revoked the authority given to the Executive Committee and exercised its proper role to remedy a problem that the Executive Committee patently refused to address.**◆

I am trying to be forgiving. I want to believe that the ◆Local 770◆ letter is merely full of mistakes rather than deceit. Nevertheless, this statement is so absurd it defies understanding. First, Mr. Welch never intended that the Board of Incorporators would exercise management judgment and jump into change the structure of JBS control whenever uninformed voices claimed that the Executive Committee was ignoring a management issue. The Executive Committee did not ◆patently refuse to address◆ the leadership matter, but had tried repeatedly to hold off the Board of Incorporators meeting until October 29 for their scheduled meeting in order to address the growing complaints. It was the Board that patently refused to allow the Executive Committee to address the matter.

CLAIM #6:

◆ **In recent years, as practiced by the majority of the controlling members of the previous Executive Committee, the group became an enforcement arm of the CEO, meant to slap down any challenge to that official◆s continued tenure, regardless of the effects on the rest of the organization.**◆

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Wow, that is quite an indictment of the most dedicated, highly respected, most generous members of the Executive Committee, to accuse them of being an enforcement arm of the CEO! Under Mr. Smith♦'s leadership many of these men substantially increased their giving to the Society. It is silly to think these successful businessmen did so because they were Mr. Smith♦'s lapdogs. Why would they, or anyone else, want to sustain in office a CEO who was doing harm to their investment in freedom? Give me a break!

Not only is the charge ridiculous, it is irresponsible speculation by individuals who have no knowledge whereof they speak, yet dare to speak with great passion. Very few individuals, other than the men involved, sat in these councils and were privy to the discussions.

And last, this statement disgracefully insults some great Birchers. Recall that in the recent past those on the Executive Committee also included Thomas N. Hill, Dr. Philip E. Binzel, Jr. and Joseph P. Grinnan, all appointed to that body by Mr. Welch.

CLAIM #7:

♦**Mr. Fotheringham wants to reconstitute the Executive Committee under majority control of Wayne Rickert, Walt Ruckel, and Keith Van Buskirk ♦ even though they failed or refused entirely to hold the former CEO accountable for his job performance, and his creating an unhealthy corporate culture we are now eradicating.♦**

My absolute conviction is that the October 21st damage to the structure of JBS control must be repaired. To do that, I stand by the recommendations in my original January 10th letter. The three men mentioned have the experience and proven dedication to get the job done. But their authority to act must not be diluted with the votes of those who supported the events of October 21st.

For many years, Wayne Rickert, Walt Ruckel, and Keith Van Buskirk carried the responsibility for holding JBS management accountable for real performance. I totally reject the self-serving characterization of these men by the ♦Local 770♦ letter. That characterization, as noted earlier, is totally irresponsible speculation by individuals who have no knowledge whereof they speak. None of the signers of that letter ever sat in an Executive Committee meeting. Their judgments of job performance are based on a very narrow view of the challenges that have faced and will face any leader of the Society.

And last, the comments about correcting the corporate culture are boastful and misleading. The new leaders have yet to demonstrate positive fruits from their leadership. But a popular, democratic, employee-driven culture would certainly have been anathema to Mr. Welch ♦ not the kind of structure needed by an organization that hopes to take on a powerful Conspiracy.

Already we see signs in the publications of this new found freedom in

direction (e.g., some embarrassing articles), where employees have the freedom to vent their spleens whether or not they persuade. Someone at the top needs to be accountable for the output of the home office. Whatever the JBS publishes represents all of the members and Chapters of this organization.

CLAIM #8:

◆... Mr. Smith engineered the removal of any member of the Executive Committee who did attempt to exercise oversight. As case in point, Mr. Fotheringham did not mention in his letter that when Executive Committee member Art Crino opposed giving Mr. Smith a ◆vote of confidence◆ last fall, he was swiftly booted off the Executive Committee and the Council without even being informed that this retaliatory action was being taken against him until after the fact. In fact, John Fall informed us that it was capricious actions such as this and others that convinced him that the Board of Incorporators needed to act sooner as opposed to later to force Mr. Smith◆s removal as CEO.◆

How many of the signers to this letter were at the Executive Committee meeting in Tampa? Zero. The author of the ◆Local 770◆ letter is having trouble maintaining the fiction that a committee wrote this letter.

According to my research, it is true that Art Crino was removed from the Executive Committee last fall (September 28th), but not because he failed at the meeting to give Vance Smith a vote of confidence. Mr. Crino was removed for breach of trust with the Executive Committee. He had boasted to JBS staff member Brian Turner that he had been at work since April 2005 urging members of the Council, and certain field staff leaders, to voice their disapproval of Vance Smith and to remove him from leadership. However, the full Executive Committee only learned of his actions in September.

Quiet and private deliberations of the Executive Committee and Council are essential in the selection of a monolithic leader. As noted earlier, Robert Welch stressed this principle in regard to his successor: ◆We should point out that it was terribly important not to advise anyone of the recommendations of the Executive Committee until the full council had an opportunity to review and consider it...◆ Art Crino violated that principle by working behind the back of his fellow Executive Committee members and was removed for so doing.

Mr. Crino◆s removal was not a crisis at all, but when the story was slightly altered, it served as yet another pretext for the unwarranted action of the Board of Incorporators. Thus, the leadership question was determined outside the established structure. Clearly, Mr. Welch never intended that the collective judgment of the men on the Council be routinely replaced by the decision of a few veteran members of his staff. That is exactly what has happened, and if the JBS is to survive, we must get the organization back under the safeguards set in place by Robert Welch.

CLAIM #9:

◆... during at least one previous leadership controversy in the past, before Mr. Smith◆s tenure as CEO, Executive Committee members visited JBS headquarters in Belmont and interviewed the employees to get a sense of the health of the company◆s culture and its internal workings in order to judge the effectiveness of the CEO. However, the Executive Committee under Mr. Smith refused to perform this indispensable function.◆

Again, this is clearly written from an employee/labor union standpoint. It is not the ◆indispensable function◆ of Boards to go behind their appointed CEO to survey employee opinion just because a few disgruntled employees desire it and decide to orchestrate the appearance of mass discontent.

There was a major difference between the unrest in 2005 and what transpired in 1986. In 1986, a few members of the Executive Committee traveled to Belmont to talk to employees, because the organization was facing bankruptcy, not because the employees were unhappy.

Something needed to be done

to keep the JBS from going under. And some of these men would be asking themselves and their colleagues to write checks and underwrite the solution, so they naturally wanted to assess for themselves the cost and productivity of the home office. In 2005, who decided that it was time for the Executive Committee to survey the employees for their opinion as to Mr. Smith◆s leadership?

CLAIM #10:

Since Mr. Smith◆s departure on October 21, 2005, the morale of the staff at JBS headquarters in Appleton has turned around 180 degrees. It is as if somebody threw open the dark drapes... There is a real spirit of teamwork that has not existed here for a very long time.◆

Let◆s have DEEDS not WORDS. If it is true that much good is coming, great. We can then all rejoice (that, for once good fruit, came from the use of improper means). For we all desperately want and need the JBS to succeed under some leadership. But so far the new leadership seems willing to brag a lot about what it is going to do and how great things are and are going to be. Let◆s see it.

But we haven◆t seen it yet. We have no new videos, no new books, and no support for any new campaigns. (Actually, we would not be surprised to see a ◆fresh, new◆ video released shortly ◆ another talking head performance of Overview by John McManus.) Even the vital fights to stop the FTAA and SPP seem to have disappeared from the JBS radar screen. What other organization is going to give leadership to the American people to oppose these blatant sellouts of our constitutional Republic?

There is no doubt that teamwork in the home office is important, but even more vital in fighting a Conspiracy is leadership that keeps the eye of the entire organization on that ball. Every veteran Society member can judge whether that kind of leadership is coming out of Appleton ♦ we don♦t need to be told how great thou art!

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[My Reply to JBS Staff Reaction...](#)

The Central Issue

On February 3, 2006 I posted on this website a five-page ♦response♦ from employees at the JBS home office to my mailing a few weeks earlier. It was signed by 19 members of the office staff at ♦770♦ Westhill Blvd. in Appleton. Its author, however, chose to remain anonymous, so I will refer to it as the ♦JBS Union Local 770♦ letter, or ♦Local 770♦ letter for short.

The ♦Local 770♦ letter starts off its reply to my letter by snidely suggesting that I may not be its real author. But it can♦t be disputed that I am identified as such and have signed it. By contrast, the idea that a committee of employees ♦ including secretaries and some who are not even JBS members ♦ came together to write the ♦Local 770♦ letter is ludicrous. Clearly, it was written by someone (see below) with a lot of anger and little commitment to what Mr. Welch had so carefully and laboriously given us.

The ♦Local 770♦ letter, together with a 20th signature, has also been sent to the JBS Council and to some of those JBS members who received my January 10 mailing. Obviously, it was sent to explain and justify the October 21 takeover of the organization. The ♦Local 770♦ letter is so full of errors and nonsense that I did not hesitate to post it on my website as an example of the trouble that can come when people think they are smarter than Robert Welch.

The fact that the ♦Local 770♦ letter was written at all should send up a red flag. It is strictly contrary to the monolithic design of the JBS for the tail to wag the dog. That is what union organizers do, they socialize their demands, itemize their grievances and make the employees think they can set policy or can walk out if they don♦t get what they want, or don♦t like who runs the company. The ♦Local 770♦ letter ♦ if we take it at face value ♦ is a perfect example of democracy at work ♦ or should I say at play? Well, the employees in Appleton had 14 years to ♦vote with their feet♦ under the ♦terrible♦ leadership of Vance Smith and Tom Gow, but I know of very few who did. The JBS is a nice place to work and the pay is good. For some who signed the letter, it is the

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best job and highest pay they have ever had. No, they are not going to resign if they don't like their next leader. Playing the union game, for right now, however, beats anything going on at Lambeau Field.

The John Birch Society was organized to fight a very powerful Conspiracy that threatens America's survival as a free and independent Republic. The authors of the October 2005 coup have done incredible damage to the structure that Mr. Welch put in place to fight that Conspiracy. That is the real central issue, not alleged employee morale problems.

On the first page of the ♦Local 770♦ letter, readers are greeted by the claim that I failed to address the ♦central matter.♦ Yet the ♦Local 770♦ letter doesn't even identify that central matter for the reader until two pages later. Finally, we are informed that lack of Executive Committee oversight, which allowed a tyrannical CEO to destroy their morale, is the central matter: ♦This is the main issue we wish to address.♦

Most of the employees in Appleton are my friends. They are good people, but *they are not the John Birch Society*. The JBS is not a building on Westhill Blvd. It is a body of highly dedicated citizens organized in chapters all over the United States. My friends in the Appleton office are paid to help our members save our country. But even the volunteer members, who are the real workforce for freedom, do not decide who runs the JBS. The 19 signatures on the ♦Local 770♦ letter exemplify the ignorance (or worse) of those who have misled them.

In many cases, I suspect, those signing the letter were pressured to do so by Alan Scholl ♦ the first signature on the letter. While at RWU, Alan had been given administrative leave because during the critical period of the launch of its online degree program, he had shifted his focus to convincing RWU employees that they should threaten to resign if Mr. Smith were not replaced. Most of those RWU employees, I am informed, had little desire to get involved in this JBS dispute. But they were under repeated pressure from Alan to join his crusade. I am particularly impressed by those employees at both organizations who did not sign or write letters and resisted this leftist strategy for creating the appearance of a mass movement.

As the letter later acknowledges, apparently to entice reluctant employees to sign it, ♦Some of us were in the dark as to the various details of the events leading up to Mr. Smith♦s removal♦ An understatement. The coup was orchestrated largely outside the home office. Even Jack McManus only climbed on board toward the end when the coup was well underway.

In addition to missing the central issue of corporate control, the letter includes a number of specific challenges and errors, which I address in an attachment to this letter. (On the website I have keyed my comments to specific paragraphs in the ♦Local 770♦ letter.)

► [Wayne Rickert](#)

[Takes Glenn Schmitz to the Woodshed](#)

► [Tom Gow Responds to Report in August JBS Bulletin](#)

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► [G. Vance Smith Ltr 3-21-06](#)

► [VOICEMAIL CLIPS: Art Thompson's and Other JBS Leaders' Concerns About John McManus](#)

► [VOICEMAIL CLIPS: Bryan Turner on Art Crino's coup involvement since April 2005](#)

► [Wayne Rickert Exposes Art Thompson](#)

We have just seen a JBS con-con

What has happened in the Birch Society is similar to a constitutional convention (con-con). There is nothing illegal about a con-con; it is provided for in the Constitution. Likewise, there is nothing illegal about the power of the JBS Board of Incorporators. That authority is mandated by the State of Massachusetts and is spelled out in the by-laws for the corporation.

Why do we work so hard to prevent a con-con even though it is legal? Because it would open the door to our enemies who could weaken or destroy the Constitution. Likewise, why do I (and others) oppose the October 21 action of the Board of Incorporators? Because they have effectively held a con-con, opening the door to our enemies who could weaken or destroy the John Birch Society. The action of the Incorporators has converted the monolithic structure of the JBS into a democratic process for selecting its officers.

In their effort to unseat the former leadership, a few individuals spent the summer and fall of 2005 fomenting discontent among the field staff and certain members of the Council. Some of them were on speaking tours and spread the ill will among our speaker chairmen and chapter leaders in all parts of the country. Meanwhile, some of our coordinators had been under pressure because of poor performance, so it was not hard to rile them up against Vance Smith, who is, yes, a very demanding leader.

The dissenters played on this unrest with great fervor and persistence. At least one of our Council members was among them. He told me he spent many hours on the phone trying to create a majority in support of dumping the CEO. I have to believe this man did not realize he had employed an old communist tactic of creating the semblance of a spontaneous uprising. However, more cool heads on the Executive Committee were not buying into it; these are the men who had put millions of dollars into the JBS, and they know how to read a balance sheet, assess competence, and discern loyalty.

What has been lost?

Despite the legal authority of the Board of Incorporators to choose the Society♦s leader, Mr. Welch made it very clear that this was to be the function of the Executive Committee, with the approval of the Council. And every leadership change, until the last one, was conducted on Executive Committee recommendation, as Mr. Welch intended. He had good reasons for entrusting these Americanists with such authority ♦ not only did he want the financial support and influence of these men; he wanted the experience and counsel of these highly successful individuals.

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Goes After John
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► [My Reply to
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Instead, an uprising orchestrated by a few attacked the structure of control while billing their campaign as merely an effort to oust Vance Smith. They attacked, as does the ♦Local 770♦ letter, the Executive Committee as being a rubber stamp for Vance Smith. This ignorant speculation is an insult to the many dedicated men who served on this body during Vance Smith♦s term as CEO, men such as Thomas N. Hill (Mr. Welch♦s right hand man for 25 years), Joseph P. Grinnan, Dr. Philip E. Binzel, Jr., and even the Hon. Clyde R. Lewis, in addition to Wayne C. Rickert, C. Walter Ruckel, and Keith VanBuskirk, only VanBuskirk was appointed to that body by Vance Smith (Thomas Hill, who had never left the Council, was reappointed to the Executive Committee by Vance Smith).

At the conclusion of this unwarranted attack, two employees on the JBS Board of Incorporators, supported by a former employee, effectively appointed themselves as the Society♦s leaders. But in reality this ♦emergency action♦ went far beyond replacing the Society♦s leader. It removed any oversight by anyone. The new leaders are unaccountable and the authority of the Executive Committee developed and nurtured by Mr. Welch has been eliminated for the foreseeable future. If the new leaders prove incompetent who can force them to step down? No one.

This coup is akin to the takeover in George Orwell♦s novel ♦Animal Farm♦ in which the animals ousted farmer Jones and took control. The results for JBS will, I predict if uncorrected, be similarly disastrous.

The dissenters try to portray this as a turf war, a vain effort by poor losers to get back their control of the JBS. While I think Vance Smith and Tom Gow are far more competent than those now in office, my purpose is not to reinstate them. I am not running a campaign for them; I am trying to prevent the destruction of the John Birch Society. This is not an overstatement. We are in deep trouble and every member needs to understand this. Just take a look at the last three JBS Bulletins (Dec., Jan., and Feb.), and you be the judge. Except for the articles of Warren Mass (who also expressed alarm over recent events at headquarters), you are getting a skimpy dose of drivel laced with half-truths and misleading statements. Does anyone see this as leadership?

While there is no evidence to my knowledge that the enemy is behind these events, he could not have done a better job by design than we are doing to ourselves by blunder, ambition, ignorance, and ego. The effect is the same ♦ disaster for the John Birch Society♦s leadership in the freedom fight.

Don Fotheringham

P.S. Please see my recently posted [comments](#) to specific claims in the ♦Local 770♦ letter.

The name of your business goes here

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RWU Appeal Letter ♦ June 2006

The following fundraising appeal letter from RWU Vice President Tom Gow was mailed in late June to several hundred supporters and potential supporters of RWU.

Since most of these supporters are also loyal JBS members, in his letter Mr. Gow addresses the history and future of the disruptive split between the two organizations, which has every good JBS member concerned.

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March 30, 2007

Dear Friends and Fellow Patriots,

By way of introduction, or in most cases re-introduction, my name is G. Allen Bubolz. I joined and became a part of the John Birch Society in 1983 after the disappearance of Congressman Lawrence P. McDonald on KAL flight 7. The horrific act of a passenger plane being downed by the Soviets, and the apparent death of a great patriot like Larry McDonald left me no other choice than to join the Society and lend my support to the Herculean efforts of helping to preserve freedom.

In March of 1986, I was honored to be asked to serve as a member of the JBS National Council ♦ a position I still hold. And in 1988, I was appointed the Society♦s Chief Executive Officer and President where I served until June 1991. Because of family and business responsibilities, I stepped down as the Society♦s CEO. And, as a member of the Executive Committee, I took part in the process of selecting G. Vance Smith as my replacement.

With most of you, I am appalled with the events that have transpired at JBS during the past year and a half. Living near the JBS headquarters, and having had a great deal of experience with the Society♦s management, its organizational and corporate structure, and the personalities involved, I believe I have a very good perspective on what has taken place.

My deep concerns have caused me to write to my colleagues on the Society♦s Council and to Jack McManus and Art Thompson. To date, I have received no response to my inquiries and suggestions from either group. Therefore, and because of the seriousness of the situation, I am left no alternative but to take my concerns to you.

As my letters to the Council and Jack and Art have indicated, I am extremely concerned about accusations being made relative to the handling of the Society♦s financial resources. There is no room in an organization like the John Birch Society for doubts regarding correct disposition of funds.

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Now, in a letter from JBS signed by Council members and dozens of others dated January 26, 2007, we read: ♦ **What they don't say is that we were suffering from a \$100,000+ monthly operating deficit....♦** In this statement, there is the allegation that the former officers and directors may be guilty of malfeasance, possibly even to the point of criminality.

The charge of a \$100,000 deficit is serious and everyone associated with the Society should insist that it be dealt with immediately. Is this merely a wild distortion of the record, as I suspect, to incite the membership against the previous leaders? Or has there been some genuine wrong-doing. We need to know.

It is absolutely essential that there be a complete and thorough outside, INDEPENDENT financial audit of the JBS books and records. It must be a full CERTIFIED AUDIT to be acceptable ♦ a ♦ compilation, ♦ a ♦ review, ♦ or anything less than a CERTIFIED AUDIT, would be unacceptable. It is my opinion that:

♦ Clifton Gunderson LLP, a very reputable CPA firm that has worked with the Society ever since I contracted with them to do so in 1989, must be charged to start that certified audit immediately. The audit period must include 2005 ♦ January thru October 21 relative to the former management team ♦ and October 21, 2005 up to the present for Jack and Art♦s team.

All of my adult life, I have been involved in the corporate world. I have started numerous corporations where I presided as CEO, Chairman of the Board of Directors, or both. I know through long experience what should happen when there is a change in top leadership ♦ especially if it is a hostile change like the one JBS experienced over a year ago. In any other company or organization, a certified audit would have been required immediately! Even though there are businessmen and an attorney on the new JBS board, this important business practice has been completely ignored at JBS.

I need your help, as Art and Jack have ignored my inquiries, and the Council has not responded to my requests, either. Perhaps they will to yours. Attached are the names and addresses of the Council as they have been given to me from the JBS home office.

♦ Because of the severity of the accusations and insinuations, please write (email, etc.) to these men and insist that they uphold their fiduciary responsibilities and demand that the Society♦s present Board of Directors and officers immediately contract with their outside CPA firm, Clifton Gunderson LLP, to do a full and complete, INDEPENDENT, CERTIFIED AUDIT (not a ♦review♦ or ♦compilation♦) of their financial records.

In a normal world, the good rank-and-file participants in an organization should never be dragged into situations like this. Nevertheless, and

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because of the way the change of leadership has been handled at JBS, there is simply too much at stake to just sit quietly while the only organization presently capable of giving leadership in the freedom fight disappears.

Thank you for taking time to read this letter, and thank you for any, and all, you do to help restore sanity to our nation and to the John Birch Society.

Sincerely,

G. Allen Bubolz
JBS Council Member

cc: JBS Council
Clifton Gunderson LLP

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Anarchy in Appleton



Don't they need money? A lost \$100,000 check (top) confirms the leadership vacuum at JBS headquarters in Appleton. When the check, a gift from an estate, arrived at the JBS mailroom, apparently no one knew what to do with it.

So it sat in an inbox for several days, until incredibly it was misrouted to RWU. RWU promptly returned the check to the embarrassed, but ecstatic head of JBS accounting. Apparently, he was unaware the check had even arrived.

As revealing as this oversight is, the administrative vacuum at headquarters is not nearly so dangerous to the future of the Society as the lack of full-time, on-the-scene *Birch* leadership.

Nature abhors a vacuum, and strong personalities at headquarters will fill the vacuum. But will they have any understanding or commitment to Robert Welch's vision of the Society's role?

Will they be committed to providing leadership to a well-organized nationwide force of Americanists involved in effective, concerted-action campaigns? Not likely, if those personalities have never joined the Society, have never participated in a local Chapter, or if they have little understanding of the unique organization Mr. Welch established.

Experience shows that a home-office team, isolated from the field organization they are supposed to be supporting, will focus on its own self-interests. Home office bureaucrats will seek to keep the computers

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running, pay the bills, respond to complaints, and mindlessly continue established services that may be missing the mark by a mile of what the field and the mission need for success.

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Art Thompson and Jack McManus Brush Off Councilmember Allen Bubolz's Inquiry

What are they hiding? Where's the accountability?

Just prior to the recent Council meeting in Raleigh, North Carolina, longtime Councilmember and former CEO G. Allen Bubolz wrote Art Thompson to ask for a full accounting of the Society's condition, as a full year had transpired since the Society's leadership and succession structure had been turned on its head.

A week later, Councilmember Bubolz received the flip reply posted below from the coup leader and now JBS CEO Art Thompson.

Not willing to accept the brush off docilely, Mr. Bubolz took Thompson politely but firmly to the woodshed with his two-page version of a ♦Correction Please!♦

To date, Mr. Bubolz has never received the information he requested. Are things so bad that the new regime cannot tolerate serious scrutiny by its board of advisors?

Indeed, Mr. Bubolz must be wondering: What, under the Society's current leadership, is left of the functions Mr. Welch envisioned for the Council? Are these men now merely window dressing, expected to sit at the head table of Council functions like penguins and bob their heads as dutiful yes-men?

Following is the exchange between Mr. Bubolz and Mr. Thompson.



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VOICEMAIL AUDIO CLIPS

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Art Thompson's warnings about John McManus

Transcript

First Art Thompson voice mail message:

◆ Vance, this is not simply an aberration. This is [Jack McManus◆] religion to be anti-Semitic and anti-Mason. That◆s all there is to it ◆ through and through, up and down, sideways. [Art stammers for a second or two and then says]: [My daughter] says that [Jack◆s church has] a website called St. Benedictine something or other and she◆s downloaded some stuff called ◆Neutralizers.◆ It◆s basically: everybody but a Moslem is a neutralizer and a liberal and out of salvation because they are not Catholic. And it◆s all Masonic and Jewish control◆. So you know it◆s amazing the more you dig the more widespread you realize all this is, and it◆s been probably a problem for us for years and we didn◆t even know it."

Second Art Thompson voice mail message:

◆ Vance, I◆m having a full set of that meeting at St. Benedictines sent to me by Hal [Shurtleff]. The disturbing aspect of it is that he is

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getting them from Mangieri. Apparently, somebody in Mangieri's area went to [the conference] and got a full set of the tapes and uh gave them or two full sets of the tapes and gave them to Mangieri. And so Hal was already one step ahead of us and already asked Mangieri to get those. So he's going to send them to me and I left you out of the loop uh just uh because. And then as soon as I get them I'll forward them to you. And uh even Hal is thinking uh. He says I'm trying to do these things without making it look like I'm uh you know uh sending up any red flags to Jack [McManus] as to what's going on. So, Hal realizes the gravity of all this. He's suddenly come to realize that there is a serious problem there. At any rate, the disturbing aspect is that this stuff is just going out all over the place and uh to our staff to our members you name it. Uh so, that's the gist of it.

Gary Benoit on John McManus**Transcript****Gary Benoit voice mail message:**

I do see where the distribution of this [material taken from a videotaped speech given John F. McManus] could be harmful [to the JBS]. But beyond that, I think Jack really is saying in the beginning of it that it is a Jewish/Masonic conspiracy. I don't agree with that myself, and I think that it could be very, very, very harmful for that position to get around and associated with the President of the John Birch Society."

Larry Waters' concerns about John McManus**Transcript****Larry Waters voice mail message:**

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◆ Vance, I just read Jack's 12-page reply to Tom [Gow] and I just have two or three comments. Number one: Even if everything [Jack] said is true about the occult Masons being the origin of the conspiracy we fight, why did Jack as Birch President state what he did in conflict with Mr. Welch and is attributed to Birchers. Number two: [Jack] agrees we don't have to fight on every front and then proceeds to do so in conflict with Mr. Welch. And number four [sic]: Doesn't [Jack] imply that Mr. Welch was wrong? I mean those three things just leap out at me, nothing profound about them. And, of course, I don't have the scholarship to examine the stuff [Jack] said. I never read the Abbé Barruel. I read Robison. So I certainly subscribe to Mr. Welch's views. So like I said, even if [Jack] is true [sic], he's still in conflict with Birch approach [sic] and with Mr. Welch's views and is attributed to Birchers everywhere.◆

Tom Hill's concerns about John McManus

Transcript

◆ Beyond that, Vance, I think it comes down to you fellows determining if the matter [with Jack] is at that point where the what-you-call-it has to hit the fan, then it has to hit the fan. I wish you could get some promises out of Jack, but those wouldn't necessarily put your mind at rest because of his being compelled to be the friend, and the leader, and the sage, and all the things that he enjoys so much being in his mind.◆

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VOICEMAIL AUDIO CLIPS

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Bryan Turner tells Gregg Smith about
Art Crino coup involvement

Transcript

Bryan Turner voice mail message:

◆ Hey Gregg. I met with Art today, Art Crino, who gave me a letter from Bill Jasper, I haven't read yet. But I just wanted to kind of give you a synopsis of what he told me. Art Crino said that he's been involved in this [the effort to remove Vance] since April [2005]. And that he didn't want to get it [awareness of the effort to remove Vance] down as far as it has. He said that he was really disappointed that it [this information] got to us, the RFDs, and some of the coordinators I guess. But, being on the Council, I'm surprised that [Art Crino] is supporting McManus still. That's weird. Anyways, I'll talk to you later.◆

Bryan Turner confirms Art Crino coup
involvement to Vance Smith

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Transcript**Bryan Turner voice mail message:**

◆ Yeah, Vance, you heard that correctly. [Art Crino] did tell me that uh he told me himself that he's been involved [in the effort to remove you as CEO] since April [2005]. So, which kind of really surprised me because I was thrown back and shocked when Gregg first told me. I had no inkling. Art told me that uh he said he was trying to keep this [information about the effort to remove the CEO] just up with the folks in the upper, upper management I guess. And he didn't want it to come down any further, but he did say that he's been working on it since April. So, I hope I'm being helpful for you, and if there's anything else I can do, please let me know.◆

Bryan Turner pleads not to be exposed for telling on Art Crino

Transcript**Bryan Turner voice mail message:**

◆ Hey Vance, this is Bryan [Turner]. I just wanted to let you know I just got off the phone with Art Crino. [Unintelligible] to share information at all ◆ with anybody because of the way things are going crazy right now. But ◆ I thought it was important that you know this because the information came from me I think originally regarding Art [Crino] working on this since April. And he now denies that. I don't know that he knows that I was the one that told you or what not, but he said that he was going to confront you with it, with that accusation in Orlando. And I thought I should tell you that. And since [Art Crino is] in my area and I'll be working with him on a regular basis. I'm sure you'd be prudent with that information that I gave you. But I just wanted to give you a heads up and let you know that he is now denying that. And I want to let you know that I know that I heard him say that and ◆ but at the same time he's in my area and I'll be working with him for a long time, so I'd like to be

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able to have a relationship with him if he's going to continue in the Birch Society. So I hope I can be helpful in keeping the Birch Society intact. And we're working our heart out here. I'm keeping up and my men are none the wiser. We're working hard getting new members in the area. So, I hope things go well and I'll talk to you soon.

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On October 21, 2005, in an unprecedented move, the JBS Board of Incorporators bypassed the time-tested protocols established by Robert Welch for selecting the Society's leaders. In effect, the Board voted to disband the Executive Committee of the National Council in order to remove G. Vance Smith and Tom Gow from their leadership positions.

In late February 2006, I received a letter from John Fall, justifying this action by himself and two other Incorporators. I have posted below my strong disagreement with Mr. Fall's assertions.

February 23, 2006

Dear John:

Thank you for taking the time to write to me and for your thorough explanation of the role of the Board of Incorporators and other important matters.

I do not doubt any of the statements you attribute to Robert Welch in respect to the Board's power and the extreme circumstances in which it might be employed. It was my conclusion (not Vance Smith's or Tom Gow's) that it was a legal fixture for launching the JBS because, first, he had no choice about it, and secondly, because he never spoke to the membership about any internal authority above the Council for appointing a successor. But I have no trouble realizing that the founder would regard the Board as an ace in the hole to be used if it were ever needed, and that he would note that exception privately. I do appreciate the point of light you have shed on this and I will correct my website accordingly.

The far more compelling factor, of course, is the basis for implementing the Board's authority. You have indicated that we faced a leadership crisis so dire that it met the criterion set forth by Mr. Welch. Given your candor (and the kindly manner of your letter, by the way), I wish you had looked into the focus, direction, and steadfast course of the Society, rather than the reports of individuals with hurt feelings, personal ambitions and bruised egos. The Society absolutely had not strayed off course, neither was there dereliction in the duty of its leaders. You were

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apparently told that Art Crino was booted off the Committee for failing to give Vance Smith a vote of confidence. John, that simply is not true. Any other member of the Executive Committee could have given you the real reason for Mr. Crino's removal, had you consulted with them. The truth: he was removed for breach of trust with the Executive Committee. He had boasted to JBS staff member Bryan Turner that he had been at work since April 2005 urging members of the Council, and certain field staff leaders, to voice their disapproval of Vance Smith and to remove him from leadership. However, the full Executive Committee only learned of Mr. Crino's extra-curricular activity in September.

My understanding is that quiet and private deliberations of the Executive Committee and Council are essential in the selection of a monolithic leader. Robert Welch stressed this principle in regard to his successor: ♦ We should point out that it was terribly important not to advise anyone of the recommendations of the Executive committee until the full council had an opportunity to review and consider it...♦ Art Crino violated that principle by working behind the back of his fellow Executive Committee members and was removed for that reason.

John, Mr. Crino's removal was proper. It was not a crisis at all. However, when the story was slightly but significantly altered, it served as yet another pretext for your decision to place the leadership question in the hands of the Board of Incorporators. In my view, this was a tragic mistake. Surely you must agree that Mr. Welch never intended that the collective judgement of men on the Council be replaced by the decision of a few veteran members of his staff. What we now have (to borrow terms from the Overview) is an immovable oligarchy replacing a limited monarchy. Members of the Board of Incorporators have appointed themselves to office, have neutered the Council, and retain the sole power of their own removal. Isn't that worse than what you have accused Vance Smith of engineering?

I realize you had been under the persuasion of both sides on the leadership matter and must have felt an urgency to meet prior to the scheduled October 29 meeting of the Executive Committee. But even if you suspected that the Executive Committee would reappoint Vance Smith, what was the reason for the rush? Had the Executive Committee met and behaved as you and others had predicted, what would have prevented the Board of Incorporators from acting immediately thereafter? So what really was the reason for the rush? I think the hurry up, no-huddle play was motivated by a realization that the Executive Committee would never have made Art Thompson the CEO. I know him well. He is a vociferous grumbler, not a leader. Neither would Larry Waters have been appointed. I know Larry well. He is a friendly, diplomatic person, but not sufficiently energetic or demanding to be the Committee's choice for vice president. I think the real rush was not against one more week of Vance Smith, but was undertaken by and for those individuals who knew that they would never be placed in leadership by the Executive Committee as it was then constituted.

► Wayne Rickert

**Takes Glenn
Schmitz to the
Woodshed**

**► Tom Gow
Responds to
Report in August
JBS Bulletin****► Rickert
Confronts
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Refutes David
Eisenberg****► Rusty Barlow &
G. Vance Smith
confront John F.
McManus****► RWU Appeal
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Expose Art
Thompson**

It is true, John, that I was never in Belmont and I accept everything you say about the congenial climate and unity inspired by Mr. Welch. I regret never having had that experience. By the same token, you were never in Appleton where I worked in the office directly under Vance Smith. I think I know his strengths and his weaknesses. He was strong, if not dynamic, in focus and direction. He knew the enemy and what must done if we seriously intend to win the war for freedom. He was a demanding leader who expected more, not less, at every level. But the notion that he did not counsel with his leaders is patently false. I attended every issues meeting held every two months at headquarters from 1993 until 2004. These were attended by all leaders, office management, field staff, leaders, senior writers, publisher, and editor of TNA. There was a cheerful, upbeat spirit at those meetings, and all participants wanted to be there. In that setting every individual was invited to speak. All options were considered and discussed. At the conclusion of each meeting Vance Smith would summarize the ideas and proposals. We all marveled at his ability to identify what could or could not be implemented in our long or short term objectives. He considered every point, made assignments in relation to them, and never forgot to follow up on those so assigned. John, if anyone who attended those meetings has said his leadership was dictatorial, arbitrary or micro-managing, that person has been shamefully dishonest with you.

Did Vance Smith have his faults? In my opinion, yes. He did not fire enough people. He allowed malcontents to simmer and spread their gloom. For 20 years before coming on the staff. I was in my own business. I learned by sad experience that even your best workers must not be allowed to demoralize the others. When I saw such problems being spawned in the JBS, I went to Vance and told him I felt so-and-so should be fired immediately. But rather than fire this person, our ♦mean-spirited♦ CEO merely transferred him to another department or area. When poor job performance was apparent, Vance moved them to a lesser job he thought they could handle. This pattern was most apparent in the field wherein the directors, fund raisers, major coordinators and coordinators repeatedly changed places. How then, does a demoted man explain his embarrassment? Does he say, ♦Well, I was just incompetent♦? Hardly. The explanation usually offered was against his leadership: ♦I could have done my job, but I was micro-managed.♦ Or, ♦I took a lesser job because I couldn♦t stand Vance Smith,♦ Too bad. The very person they now condemn did not want to fire them out of concern for their personal needs or their many years on the staff. I did not agree with this policy and it has come back to haunt him. Another mistake worth mentioning was the re-hiring of Art Thompson, which Vance Smith did against the very intuitive advice of Tom Hill.

Now, you have criticized me for passing myself off as an authority in this conflict. If you knew me you would know that neither the authority nor the limelight are my forte. I am not comfortable attempting to set the record straight, nor do I take any pride in being out of step with the most

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wonderful people I know, my Birch friends. No, I do not have superior knowledge about the Board of Incorporators. I was never told anything privately by Mr. Welch, and therefore you are the person who should have spoken up. Your intimate knowledge of this, combined with the fortitude to look beyond the lies, would eminently qualify you to stand up so I can sit down. After waiting two months for the Council to act, and seeing no one on the horizon willing to do the right thing, what was I to do? If you could forsake your investment in error and throw your 45 years of experience into saving the Birch Society from the frauds who now run it, I would give you my website and pay the bill.

Does anyone really think the JBS can pursue its mission under the present leadership? I frankly do not. I think God has blessed us because we have always told the truth. I do not think it is possible to win this difficult battle unless we are strictly honest in every respect. That includes the duty to correct an erroneous perception whether it tends to make one look good or bad. Silence can, at times, also be a lie. My motivation stems from the same spirit by which you and I joined the JBS. If the truth can save America, surely it can save the John Birch Society. I feel certain that you have been lied to, or simply allowed to believe the lies of others. I am certain that the groundwork for this had been meticulously laid by a few liars. We know from the lessons of Mr. Welch that ♦spontaneous uprisings♦ are a myth. Somebody plans them and provokes them. I find it quite remarkable that ♦there was widespread concern and calls for Vance Smith♦s resignation from many members of the Council, the senior field staff, members of the office staff, senior editors for The New American, a member of the Executive Committee itself and a member of the Board of Directors who was (at the time) the former President.♦ Those are your words, of course, John, but don♦t you agree that it takes a good deal of orchestration to bring about such widespread, anger and such concerted discontent?

Before joining the staff, I hosted Overview presentations given by Jack McManus. Later, while serving as Idaho coordinator I arranged more speeches and media interviews for Jack than he said he had had in any other state. Whenever the media attempted to link the JBS with anti-Semitism, Jack defused the charge by saying how sad it makes our Jewish members feel when they hear such nonsense. Jack♦s manner of handling such questions was a great blessing to all of us. I too, have been his friend for many years and I have no bad feelings toward him - disappointment, yes, but nothing unforgivable.

From your explanation of opposing Christian and Jewish religious beliefs, I presume you are justifying certain portions of Jack♦s presentation given at religious gatherings. So rather than make any further comment John, let me ask if you have seen the videotapes which include his comments on the subject, including his introduction as President of the JBS and Publisher of The New American magazine? If you have seen the videos and you are not offended, then your opinion and mine are matters of judgement, and on that score, we have nothing further to discuss. On the other hand, if you have not seen the videos, I

urge that you see them and determine for yourself whether or not they are harmful to Jack and the Society as well.

I have always regarded David Eisenberg as one of my best friends on the Council. We have exchanged letters and shared ideas in recent years. When I called him in October to ask him to urge the Board of Incorporators to hold off until after the 29th, I was surprised by his reaction. He seemed very upset, abrupt, and almost angry that I would ask him to do that. He immediately began to express bitterness toward Vance Smith. He did not seem to understand that I was not asking him to support Vance Smith or anyone else. From reading his letter, which you had enclosed, I presume he must have asked Jack to amend some part of his written speech. Although this may have pacified David, how does one retrieve speeches that have already been given, or erase videotapes that have already been sent to those who ordered them on the internet?

John, I do not take offence at any of your comments or counsel. You spent some time writing to me and I do not question your purpose or integrity. If there are mistakes in my January 10th letter, they are my own. The documents attached to that letter came from Vance Smith and Tom Gow whose defense was never reviewed by anyone and who were shamefully treated in the Bulletin. In Appleton, I could not get to work early enough to be ahead of them, nor could I stay late enough to see them leave. They virtually gave their lives to the cause of freedom and all their energy to building the JBS.

A few of your other concerns are addressed on my website. I strongly feel that with your sincere intent, the JBS can be saved, that proper roots can be planted under new, well qualified leaders. I sense a great urgency to restore those roots. Please feel free to call me if you wish to do so.

Sincerely,

Don Fotheringham

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March 22, 2006

Dear John:

Something about your February 13 letter made me think we shared the same standard, and therefore I fully expected a reply from you. I have not been too proud to correct my mistakes, or too vain to publish them. I had very much hoped that a good level of candor would prevail between us and that you would respond as I have regarding our predispositions.

In your letter you explained that Mr. Welch saw the Board of Incorporators as ◊ an important ultimate safeguard with the power to act when subordinate channels of leadership might become derelict or worse in their duties to keep the Society true to its course, and to his (Mr. Welch◊s) intended purpose.◊

On October 3, 2005 you signed a petition stating that ◊ Mr. Smith has served as the CEO for nearly 14 years during which time much good has been accomplished. He faithfully kept the Society true to the mission Robert Welch originated.◊

Well John, was that just a diplomatic way of dismissing Vance Smith, or was it your honest opinion that he stayed true to the mission? I must assume you signed that petition in earnest, and therefore I wonder why you immediately invoked the power of the Incorporators. Was it the ◊ or worse◊ clause that led to your final decision?

On January 31, the new JBS team wrote ◊ ...when Executive Committee member Art Crino opposed giving Vance Smith a ◊ vote of confidence ◊ last fall, he was swiftly booted off both the Executive Committee and the Council, without even being informed that this retaliatory action was being taken against him until after the fact. In fact, John Fall informed us that it was capricious actions such as this and others that convinced him that the Board of Incorporators needed to act sooner as opposed to later to force Mr. Smith◊s removal as CEO.◊

If you regarded the Crino story as an ◊ or worse◊ development, demanding Board action, and you now understand the real reason for Art Crino◊s exit, we come up with no just cause for the October 21 meeting. Unless you have something else to clarify, it appears that the

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whole future of the John Birch Society hinged on factors that were clearly invalid by any interpretation of the founder's intent.

A great deal of time has gone into turning the JBS upside-down. Cliff Wasem told me he had been working on this since June, 2005, constantly on the telephone urging staff and council members to voice their opposition to Vance Smith and to install Art Thompson. Cliff called again a few days ago to tell me that even Tom Gow's mother was against Tom's role in this controversy. Ironically, as he spoke, I was looking at a letter on my desk from Virginia Gow (Tom's mother) expressing appreciation for my support of her son's position. I tell you this John because it typifies a willful disregard for truth that has characterized nearly every step of the "dump Vance Smith" campaign.

Since last summer, many good men have been "had." I feel certain you acted on the best information available to you, but I am also convinced that you, John, have also been "had." I doubt if you realize it was Art Thompson who first brought the Mc Manus tapes to the attention of Vance Smith and the Council. He used this to ease Jack out of Appleton, at which time Art fully expected to replace Jack as President. (His buddy, Cliff Wasem led the campaign for Art as JBS President in 2003.)

When Art Thompson failed to win Jack's position, he decided to concentrate on winning Jack's favor - an investment that paid off for Art on October 21. Fantastic? Yes, but truth tends to be that way. However, the connivance of Art Thompson is not over yet. A few weeks ago Art and Larry Waters visited a donor on the west coast who reported that they said "Jack has always been a loose cannon and that is something we will have to deal with." They did not elaborate on what they intended to do, but they are quite skilled in the leadership removal business.

JBS friends tell me the new leaders are handing out copies of your letter. That means they want to perpetuate their story about Art Crino's removal, and other tales that seemed plausible when you wrote to me on February 13. Does that mean you have nothing to correct, or that you have not tried to verify anything I attempted to explain in my reply, and that you are content to let false notions prevail?

If your Board meeting was induced by fraud, any action taken there could easily be nullified, and you alone could do that. America's future is in your hands John - it is all up to you.

Sincerely,

Don Fotheringham

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May 4, 2007

Dear Dr. Leithart,

I recently received a copy of an email that you wrote to some dedicated and deeply concerned JBS members who had asked for your support in requesting a financial audit at JBS. Even though you asked that the letter not be forwarded to any of us affiliated with RWU, good people are compelled to pass their correspondence along when they do not feel they are getting their inquiries answered thoroughly enough. Since you are relatively new to the Council, I have volunteered to write you and, again, seek answers and clarification.

The request was simple ◊ an audit ◊ needs to be performed. Now that so much time has elapsed, you need not only to audit the year before the change in leadership, but you now should also audit the performance of the JBS since the change in Oct of 2005. This needs to be a full audit, not just a performance review or compilation of records.◊

This is a justified request. It would not matter if Allen Bubolz or Wayne Rickert or Jeffrey Skinner went to the Appleton JBS headquarters and spent a day or more looking at the books. That would not constitute a certified audit done by an outside impartial CPA firm. You understand that, and you must also understand that the request for the audit comes, at least in part, because of the letter you signed dated January 26, 2007. In that letter you stated:

◊Here are the facts we now feel compelled to relate dealing with why the Society needed new leadership. To begin with, as the letters being mailed out to our members and donors admit, the Society was in decline. What they don◊t say is that we were suffering from a \$100,000+ monthly operating deficit, and good people were being run off continually.◊

This is an incredible accusation you have made! Or, perhaps you didn◊t make the accusation? Perhaps the letter◊s unidentified author took license and was not checked by you and the other signers as to the veracity of his statements? Perhaps he was the same someone who helped start the smear campaign against Vance Smith, Tom Gow, and us on the former Executive Committee so many months ago.

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Nevertheless, and for whatever reason, you chose to sign the letter as if you had written it yourself. So you have to agree, you are responsible for the probable actionable statements that were made in it.

Vance Smith and the former management team spent wisely, as far as we could see, the Society's valuable and scarce resources during the many years they ran the Society. We, as an Executive Committee, met with them several times a year and we carefully went over the financials that were prepared for us by the Society's accounting department and its contracted accounting firm, Clifton Gunderson, LLC. To the best of our knowledge Vance Smith and his team spent efficiently and effectively the income (e.g. donations, contributing support, TNA advertising, and wills and bequests) and did exactly what they said they would do in the Bulletins and fundraising letters that were sent out. They paid salaries, expenses of field staff, operating costs, and they developed and paid for the truly outstanding campaigns that the Society had undertaken.

For over 14 years the Society was run well by that team. The Society's membership supported them. I believe you supported them with your efforts and your means. Why then, have you allowed yourself and your name to be used by those apparently full of hate and anger to denigrate those who served so well, and for so many years?

When it comes to expenditure of funds, are the present leaders doing differently? Are they not spending the Society's income, including wills and bequests, to pay the day-to-day operating expenses?

In September 2005, we on the Executive Committee were given reports indicating that the regular and projected income for the year was down. The fundraising team, who included Larry Waters, Jim Fitzgerald, Bill Cherry, Tom Rice, and their leader Art Thompson, were down \$500K from goal, and down \$350K for the same time period from the previous year. We also were shown where bequest money had been used to help compensate for the poor fundraising performance. I will be happy to send you a copy of that report, and I will gladly give it to the auditors at the commencement of the audit.

By the way, it wasn't until several months later that we learned that, instead of working diligently to reach the Society's financial goals, at least two of those fundraisers, Art Thompson and Larry Waters, were spending their time, and the Society's resources, orchestrating a smear campaign against the people signing their paychecks. How's that for integrity?

No, Dr. Leithart your response to members is not adequate. Yes, there needs to be a full and complete audit done by a neutral outside accounting firm. Yes, it may cost \$50 to \$60K. And, the amount of money needed to cover those costs should easily be recovered by eliminating the salary of the man, or men, who wrote the nefarious letter that you and others were persuaded to sign on January 26, 2007.

► [Wayne Rickert](#)

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Expose Art

Thompson

For the record, Tom Gow did not write this letter. And, by the way, I have been assured that he did not write the other letters that some at JBS have accused him of writing.

Further, your statement that ◉The former CEO is determined to either get back his position or destroy the JBS◉ is not at all the case. I know Vance Smith very well. He is not that kind of man. Most probably, in your heart, you know that as well.

Robert Welch University and the new organization are moving, and are moving forward. The battle to preserve freedom and expose the Conspiracy is paramount to all real patriots. And the consequences of not engaging in that battle with the selfless determination and seriousness of purpose demonstrated by Robert Welch will cause the entire freedom fight to come up short and ensure victory for our adversary.

Over the past nearly five decades, you and all good Birchers have been able to count on the accuracy and documentation of virtually everything that came out of JBS headquarters. Unfortunately, during the past 18 months that has changed. Rather than predetermining that this letter is just another ◉brickbat,◉ please look carefully and deeply into what we are saying. So much is at stake, and I◉m certain that you want to be on the side of truth and accuracy.

We have chosen a course where ◉Truth is our only weapon.◉ And at present, you are saying, ◉Both Art Thompson and Jack McManus have been doing an outstanding job.◉ Only time, critical as it is, will determine who was right.

Nevertheless, I agree that all members and donors of the Society should want that audit, and we are counting on you to help us get it. Further, good doctor, as the good Christian man that you are, it is my opinion that you owe Vance Smith, Tom Gow, and the former Executive Committee members, living and dead, an apology for allowing your signature to be affixed to the letter of January 26, 2007.

Sincerely,

Keith Van Buskirk

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April 25, 2007

Dear Jack,

Thank you for sending us your view on what has happened to the John Birch Society. At the end of your letter you said that if we had further questions, we should send them along. After reading your letter, we do have questions. Please, do answer the following:

◆ Where was the charge of ◆mismanagement◆ made? What your letter of January 26, 2007 stated was, ◆What they don◆t say is that we were suffering from a \$100,000+ monthly deficit.◆ We saw no claim of ◆mismanagement,◆ only insinuation that the former leader had done something terribly wrong. Another question, was that not your intention?

◆ You mentioned financial statements, cash balances of \$886,999, etc. Jack, please explain what you mean. The Society gets money from we members every year. It goes to you in contributions, TNA advertising, continuing support, and from the wills of members who have passed on. Maybe we are too simple to understand, but why would this money not be spent? The appeal letters say money will be spent on campaigns, new coordinators, etc. That◆s why we send it to you. If we thought the former leaders (by the way, you were one of them) were hoarding the money like the near million dollars you mentioned, we would have stopped sending money long ago. Again, please explain.

◆ When Vance Smith, Tom Gow, and the former Executive Committee members were forced to resign in October 2005, were the Society◆s bills paid, did the employees receive their pay checks on time, and did the field staff get their expense checks as they should? Please answer. Also, please tell us honestly how you are doing in these areas since that date.

◆ You said that Mr. Bubolz has received the offer to go to headquarters to review the books. Is that a true statement? Will you please send us proof?

◆ Mr. Bubolz has asked for a full and complete certified audit to clear up all these allegations that are being tossed out. We very much support his request, and we would think that anyone who ever took over a business

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would feel the same way. And, Jack, we know that you have never been in business as most of your life has been spent getting a paycheck from the JBS. You said that audits were being conducted in the early days of the Smith regime and that they were stopped by Smith. Is this statement true? Or because of your lack of business experience, are you just repeating an untruth that has been told to you? Please send along something that proves your accusation. You owe it to all the JBS membership to be honest and to write only that which can be proven.

◆ You quote Vance Smith as saying, ◆ If ever the time comes that the Society◆s properly empowered officials feel it◆s time for me to move on, I will do so with thanks for the years I was given the helm.◆ You know Jack, more than once we heard Vance say almost the same thing. Our questions to you are, did the properly empowered officials ask Vance to step down? We thought the Executive Committee was that proper authority. Are we wrong? Did they not put you, Vance and Tom Gow in office back in 1991? Did they not remove you as President a couple of years ago? And should they not have been the one to ask Vance to step down?

Jack, we have read correspondence that claims the Executive Committee members wanted to deal with the issues you and others had brought to their attention. Wayne Rickert and Keith Van Buskirk, called you and asked you to hold off your board of incorporators meeting just a few days so they could do so at a Council meeting in Florida. And, you forbid these ◆proper officials◆ from doing their job ◆ you held your meeting and took the authority away from them. Is that true?

◆ Another question, Jack, did not the Executive Committee always select the leader before this last change? Did you take the authority away from the Executive Committee because you knew if they did meet in Florida and did decide to replace Vance Smith, that they would not reinstate you as JBS President? Have you since tried to explain away your anti-Jewish religion views by saying that they are merely your Catholic views? Please answer that question, and please know that as Catholics, we do not share your views about the Jewish religion.

◆ You, in this letter and in the new May Bulletin, infer that Vance ◆found a judge who accepted his claim.◆ Are you insinuating that Vance somehow arranged with the court system to have a liberal judge assigned to the case? And are you suggesting that the liberal judge would be more on the side of the man who led the JBS for nearly 15 years than the new kids on the block? Jack really, are you suggesting such a thing?

◆ Jack, based upon what we have read, you took control of the JBS with the board of incorporators, and Vance, Tom, Wayne, Walt, and Keith kept control of RWU. Don◆t you believe that what is good for the goose is good for the gander? Please explain to us why you think what you did was right, and what they did was wrong?

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◆ Jack, you close by saying you had to do what you did because so many people were going to quit because of Vance Smith. Because you made such a bold move, you were again enthroned as JBS President. We have no way of knowing what would really have happened if things had been handled properly by the proper Executive Committee, but we can see clearly what has happened since you and Art Thompson forced your way in. Our final question is, are you happy with what you have done to the John Birch Society? Do you believe Robert Welch and Tom Hill are proud of what you have done? Please answer those questions.

Thank you for offering. We look forward to your answers.

Loren and Colleen Hawkins

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April 23, 2007

Mr. Art Thompson, Chief Executive Officer
The John Birch Society
770 Westhill Blvd.
Appleton. WI 54914-6521

Mr. John F. McManus, President
41 Spring Street
Wakefield, MA 01880

Dear Art and Jack:

I was fortunate enough to have received a copy of the letter that former John Birch Society president and current National Council member, G. Allen Bubolz, forwarded to the other National Council members. I wholeheartedly support Mr. Bubolz♦ suggestion for an independent full certified audit.

I am most upset in what has transpired over the past year and a half and continue to be very upset about the way a number of matters have been handled. I couldn't disagree more with the actions taken to remove the prior administration.

I have been greatly concerned by the charges intimated that there might have been some financial irregularities. I also believe that the entire membership should be aware of the financial condition of the Society for the year 2005 up the time when the last administration left on October 21 and from that period to date, under the current administration.

I agree with Mr. Bubolz that a compilation or review will not suffice. I know the difference having worked many years in public accounting. A full certified audit should be undertaken immediately and the results will put to rest the accuracy or honesty of statements being thrown around the past many months.

I ask that you seriously and quickly act on his suggestion. The seriousness of accusations demands it and the membership are entitled to some honest independent information.

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Thank you.

Sincerely,

Michael R. Casey

MRC/bc

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April 25, 2007

Mr. Jeffrey S. Skinner
P. O. Box 7007
Northridge, CA 91327

Dear Mr. Skinner:

Thank you for your prompt reply to my letter requesting a certified audit.

I appreciate your disclosing some details of your history with Society. I always appreciate receiving such information from the leaders. It is not too often that the members receive insight into the leadership. In addition to your service to your country within the Society, I commend you on your military service. I have a large soft spot in my heart for all veterans. My family served in Vietnam during the Vietnam War.

By way of background let me extend to you some details of my history with the Society.

I joined the JBS in 1968. I have also served as a chapter leader. For 39 years I have also been a major financial supporter of local Birch activities, a contributor to JBS affiliates, a TNA advertiser (MIDAS Realty and Financial Planning) and helped with the purchase of the buildings in Appleton. Thus, I also have a major interest in the financial well being of the JBS.

I also served as a group leader of many of the ad hoc committees during the past four decades. I funded many of these activities substantially. I also made several trips to Appleton and Belmont over the years and like you I had many honest and frank meetings with high-ranking members of the administrations over the years.

With regard to the question at hand on the need for a certified audit, it is not enough to invite members of the Society into the office to review the books. I'm sure we all know the important difference between a cursory review of the records by lay members of the Society and an independent Certified audit conducted by independent Certified Public Accountants.

I really wouldn't accept such a review by Allen or Wayne, with or without limitations. Nor would I accept such a review from the current

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administration. Serious implications have been made against the former administration and such a review by either or both sides is not to my satisfaction. I would, however respect and accept an independent Certified audit.

I believe the members are entitled to such an audit. You may think that the expense of an audit would be an unwise use of our limited funds but I couldn't disagree more. The integrity of the Society and the character of a number of long term important members have been exacerbated. You want members to lock step behind the current administration and forget the serious allegations and attacks on administrators I have respected and agreed with for nearly four decades. Why a Council member of the Society would want to sweep such things under the rug is hard for me to understand.

I have been aware of a number of attempted schisms and breaks in the Society over the years. In such cases I have spent a great deal of time evaluating the circumstances surrounding such attempts. I did my homework and came to the conclusion that the current administrations were correct and had my full respect and support. This latest coup also required that I spend a substantial amount of time evaluating the circumstances of this latest schism.

This however, is the first time in four decades that I have had to disagree with the current administration. I am appalled and deeply disappointed at the manner in which this coup was orchestrated. There are so many things that have been done that I disapprove of. I am deeply concerned for the survival of the Society. I am so upset about a large number of matters that I do not think the Society will weather this storm. I have no intention of walking away from the fight to save the greatest country in the history of the world from the greatest conspiracy in the history of the world. However, I will put my time and money where I believe it will do the most good. Unfortunately, I do not have faith in the current administration.

I'm quite upset and concerned that the current leaders feel they can issue what I consider to be insults serious enough to be slanderous and not have the resolve to prove their allegations. I need to know who is telling the truth about intimated financial irregularities. This is not a minor event. It is one of the most serious of charges one can make about the character of individuals that can blot out their lives. I must insist on an audit and will continue my work to get to the bottom of this. It is too serious not to be taken seriously. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Michael R. Casey

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December 4, 2006

Dear Jack:

Next year marks the 40th anniversary from when I had been introduced to the John Birch Society. It has been an educational 40 years and the best relationship I have had in my life. For sure the years have been exciting. There have been many disappointments and many successes to celebrate. I have had the good fortune to have met the finest people this country has produced.

You and I have shared bread many times as you had done with so many others over the years. You were always a shining example of what one should look to emulate. I was particularly impressed with you for a number of reasons that we shared as equals. You were a New Yorker. You were an Irish Catholic. You were a Marine as were members of my family. I was awestruck when I was first introduced to you. You were so knowledgeable, so charismatic, such a great speaker, etc., etc., etc. You would have to search a long time to find someone that had more respect and admiration for you than I. Over the years, that respect and admiration never waned but grew and grew. You were always so generous with your time, experiences and knowledge. I was ever so grateful for what I learned from you. You gave yourself so fully and so freely. What you have accomplished for the John Birch Society and the country can only be imagined. We are still free today only for the sacrifices you and others have made with your lives. No one shall ever be able to take those sacrifices and credits from all of you.

Several months ago I received some correspondence that requested that I respond to certain situations that have arisen during this past year. Having been ill the past two years, I was unaware of the situation boiling over in the Society. I responded to some questions that supported Messrs. Van Buskirk, Rickert and Ruckel. Of everything I knew about these gentlemen over a forty-year period, I would give my whole support for the supreme sacrifices they have made over the past forty years. These are some of the great patriots I give credit to above. When asked to render a decision on my opinion of you, I indicated that I wouldn't touch that at all. I couldn't imagine myself reviewing your actions, attitudes and accomplishments. I wasn't qualified to provide an

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analysis and opinion of you, other than the fact that I have held you in the highest of opinions over the past forty years, second only to my respect and admiration of Mr. Welch himself. Nothing has changed my opinion.

Over the past six months, I have had a chance to read and review hundreds of pages of documents, correspondence and other papers pertaining to the current rift in the hierarchy of the Society. As most of the old-timers are aware, this is not the first time we have had internal strife at the top levels of the Society. It unfortunately will probably not be the last time. However, I consider this latest problem to be the worst we have been exposed to and I believe it is serious enough to cripple, permanently, the John Birch Society. More damage has been done by ourselves than has been accomplished by the Insiders. They couldn't have done us any more harm than we have dealt ourselves. We have met the enemy and it is we. I have read lots of information from both sides of the aisle. I have spoken with individuals from both sides of the aisle. I have been able to reach a conclusion that is not questionable but exact in my conclusions of support for the Executive Council members, Messrs Van Buskirk, Rickert and Ruckel. There is no room in my analysis and conclusions of a wishy-washy position of both parties being right and wrong and that significant compromises should be made on the part of all parties. I believe, with all my heart and knowledge that the moves taken by the current management leaders have to be reversed in what has transpired in order to save the Society and the country.

Jack, I firmly believe that the senior management has to turn back the decision that was made to initiate the Board of Incorporators into dictating the operations of the Society. As most of us know and agree, it was the Council and especially the Executive Council of the Society that has been entrusted to carry out the principles of Mr. Welsh's plans for the continuing future of the Society. Nearly fifty years of operating history bears this out without any deviation during that entire period. What you and the other current leaders have done is without precedent. There are just so many things wrong with the way these actions were taken and I cannot offer any support for any of these actions. It is hard to believe and comprehend everything that has been done. I consider these actions so seriously and negatively that I do believe it is the worst problem the Society has had to face. I further believe that these actions might very well seal the fate of the Society by shutting it down in a very short period of time. I find it hard to believe that the actions you and the others have taken was without consideration of the fallout of your actions. You may be held singularly responsible for the collapse of the John Birch Society and the collapse of America. I don't need to speak with superlative adjectives to state the significance of these actions. You may have, in your hands the future of civilization as we know it. On this point there is no exaggeration.

When I review the results of operations for the past year, I see frightening results of gross miscalculation on the part of current management that could not or would not see the results of their actions.

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[Thompson](#)

The collapse of the financial situation should have been expected. I don't know how any of you couldn't have seen this. Did you honestly expect those who were in extreme disagreement with your actions to support you financially? Did any of you think that your legal actions and the costs thereof were going to be met with cheers and checkbooks? When the best personnel we have had in decades were dismissed did any of you think you were going to run the organization without these great people? When the field staff was released voluntarily and involuntarily, did any of you think about how you were going to run the organization without the backbone of a field staff? The loss of such significant numbers of key personnel not only disrupts current operations significantly but also assures that the future of the Society has no chance to recover let alone grow.

I am one of many members who believe that a major mistake has been made. I have always been supportive of the premise that the Executive Committee and Council shall assist management in the operations of the Society including the selection of management to run the Society's operations. I believe that premise now as I have believed it for the past forty years. There is nothing I have learned through discussions with the Council members and management leaders over the past forty years that would change my opinion. I have read enough of the writings of Mr. Welch and others to know that this premise is the correct one. There is nothing to support the actions the current management has taken.

I know lawyers on both sides of the legal battles have reviewed organization documents and other papers. I have had an opportunity to review these same documents. While the authority of the Board of Incorporators is spelled out in the Articles of Incorporation, I am not convinced that the Incorporators had the necessary grounds to take the action they did take. However, not being an attorney involved in the legal action my opinions do not carry much weight. However, the actions taken by the Board Of Incorporators was very much overstepping and I believe totally unnecessary. I do not support these actions at all. I will not be able to support the Society as it is governed today. My total support stands, instead, for the support of the Council as it stood before this coup. A more frightening scenario would be if, God forgive, something should happen to you and the total control of the John Birch Society would fall into the hands of management with very dubious management competence.

Jack, I appeal to you to review your actions and the repercussions from those actions just over this past year. The Society has never been in worse shape. You have a chance to reverse these actions and to allow for a return to the well-run organization of the past nearly fifty years. You have a chance to continue to be the champion you have been all along. If the demise of the Society is to be, it will clearly fall on your shoulders. You have to make the biggest and most important decision of your life. So much falls on that decision. Please continue to be my hero. I send prayers in support of you.

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McManus](#)

► [My Reply to
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I will reach out to contact you by telephone. I would love to talk to you for a few minutes. Please feel free to contact me.

Warmest personal regards to you, your family and the staff. I'll keep you all in my prayers.

Your sincere friend

Michael R. Casey
MRC/bc
Cc: Members of the Council and Others

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Art Thompson's](#)

July 18, 2006

Mr. Wayne Rickert
Mr. Walt Ruckel
Mr. Keith Van Buskirk

Gentlemen:

Thank you for ♦hanging tough♦ in the leadership crises regarding The John Birch Society. I only hope that the Executive Committee, as it was formerly comprised, can re-gain control and function as Robert Welch designed. Your diligence in this important legal battle is noted and appreciated by me. I am sure the time and financial resources expended are considerable.

I am a former JBS Coordinator who covered Southern Idaho, Eastern Oregon and Northern Nevada in my assigned duties. The time frame was the 1970♦s. Vance Smith had similar responsibilities in parts of Colorado in the same time period. We knew each other through various staff meetings held for leadership training and other purposes.

Though I have a great deal of respect for Vance, I see this current battle as one of following the Robert Welch formula for leadership succession versus usurpation by a group of mutineers. That the JBS succession mechanism should be enacted ♦ not allowing Jack and Art to assume leadership on a whim ♦ is the issue.

If the Executive Committee selects Vance Smith or someone else as President and/or CEO makes little difference to me though I feel Vance has done a great job in spite of difficult times for the freedom battle. At least it would be done within the framework instituted by Mr. Welch.

Many thanks for your continuing contributions to the Americanist cause.

Sincerely,

Michael D. Thomas
2440 North 600 West
Pleasant Grove, UT 84062

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February 12, 2007

Dear Fellow Patriot,

After our last letter to you, it was our full intention to ignore the now subverted JBS and move on to the more important mission of saving America from the Insiders. However, the most recent, and potentially libelous, diatribe from Appleton dated January 26, 2007 is so deceitful that we felt another letter was needed to set the record straight.

Robert Welch said the time would come when it would appear that the world had become an ♦insane asylum, run by its inmates.♦ Sadly, that is exactly what has become of the very organization, The John Birch Society, Mr. Welch created to combat the problem he identified.

The Appleton ♦inmates♦ seem to think you are crazy enough to believe a story that is opposite to what you already know to be true. In other words, they are assuming you will believe their claims, rather than what you have seen with your own eyes.

Just a few examples

In their letter, they state that under Vance Smith, Tom Gow, and the oversight of the JBS Executive Committee, the JBS was ♦suffering from a \$100,000+ monthly operating deficit....♦

If that were the case, wouldn♦t the immensity of that problem have been obvious? Wouldn♦t debts to vendors have been so high that production would have stopped? Wouldn♦t salary and especially expense checks to the field staff have been delayed? Wouldn♦t the production of tools to support campaigns (books, videos, pamphlets, billboards, bumper strips, etc.) have been slowed down or halted altogether?

We could go on and on with insurmountable difficulties the Society would have had to deal with if this outrageous claim were true. But the simple truth was that up until October 2005:

♦ Books, videos, and all other campaign materials were coming out of Appleton so the JBS members could engage the enemies of freedom

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with truly effective campaigns;

- ◆ Field staff members were always paid their salary and expense checks on time;
- ◆ Bills to vendors were paid up to within 30 days;
- ◆ And the general membership was supporting the ◆ Stop the FTAA ◆ and other campaigns by confidently sending contributions to Appleton.

The insanity is that the Appleton ◆ inmates ◆ are asking JBS members to believe the opposite of what they already know to be true.

For instance, after October 2005:

- ◆ Effective concerted action campaigns and the tools needed to help carry them out have all but stopped coming out of the JBS home office;
- ◆ Field staff salary and expense checks have been delayed, sometimes for several weeks;
- ◆ And, unlike previous years, the subverted Society has sent several additional fund appeal letters out, and, because of financial shortfalls, has pled for money continually in the pages of their tabloid (the once esteemed *Bulletin* downgraded to save money).

Raising the necessary money to run The John Birch Society has never been easy. Those of us with long memories can remember the shortfalls that seemed to constantly plague the Society even in Mr. Welch◆s day. But, with the regular income the Society would receive from its members and the occasional bequests that would come in, the Society, up until now, has survived.

And, yes, money from such bequests was used to help pay operating expenses, just as the donors intended and just as thousands of non-profits do everyday. And, we should add, just as the dissident JBS leadership is doing with the estate gifts it now receives.

And no, the accusations in their letter about a \$100,000+ per month deficit are patently false, and many who signed the letter know very well that the statement is simply not true.

All JBS Council members received from us a few months ago a financial statement dated September 30, 2005. That financial statement indicated clearly that the Society was in as sound a financial position as it had ever been. All bills were paid when we resigned, and during the 14 plus years Vance Smith served as CEO, we had also bought and paid for the two JBS headquarters buildings in Appleton.

The insanity here is that most Council members, and the two JBS accountants who prepared the September financial statement, all signed

► [Wayne Rickert Takes Glenn Schmitz to the Woodshed](#)

► [Tom Gow Responds to Report in August JBS Bulletin](#)

► [Rickert Confronts Eisenberg \(cont'd\)](#)

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► [VOICEMAIL CLIPS: Art Thompson's and Other JBS Leaders' Concerns About John McManus](#)

► [VOICEMAIL CLIPS: Bryan Turner on Art Crino's coup involvement since April 2005](#)

► [Wayne Rickert Exposes Art Thompson](#)

the letter! It is truly amazing! (If you would like a copy of those financials, we♦ll be happy to have them sent to you.)

The insanity goes on and on. You who work so diligently out in the trenches know, and can see with your own eyes, how the Society is currently doing. Please, answer the following questions for yourself. Since October 2005,

◆ Are there now effective concerted action campaigns, and the campaign tools to match, that can be used to fight the Conspiracy and help recruit others into our ranks?

◆ Are we growing here where I live? Do I see new members? New chapters? And, is my own chapter meeting effectively on a monthly basis?

◆ Do we in our area still have a Coordinator? And if so, do we ever see him? (Notice that the JBS letter lumps under one category both hourly office employees and the most important salaried employee, the field Coordinator ♦ the man who helps bring about membership and chapter growth out in the trenches. Was this done to conceal the dwindling Coordinator number amongst the bloated office staff?)

◆ And finally, do I believe the Society is better off because of the *coup d'etat*-style change in leadership?

The JBS letter of January 26, 2007 was signed by virtually everyone ♦ employees, Council members, et al. ♦ as if they all wrote it. Could they all have written it? Is it possible that there can be complete unanimity to the point that dozens of people can write one letter? More importantly, do all the signers truly believe everything that is written in that letter?

We have to wonder if the Council members actually even read what they signed and whether employees simply signed the letter to protect their jobs.

Another reason for questioning the meaning of the signatures has to do with the letter♦s criticisms of the former Executive Committee. It would appear that those criticisms must have come from some bureaucratic ♦inmates♦ in Appleton, for we have had no direct working relationship with most of those who ♦signed♦ the letter.

During the many years we served on the Society♦s Executive Committee, we had the privilege of linking arms with a number of great patriots whose names we♦re sure you will recognize. They included: C.R. Lewis, Thomas N. Hill, Joseph P. Grinnan, Dr. Phillip Binzel, and others. It is hard for us to believe that all who signed the letter actually wanted to accuse such truly great Americans of being mindless puppets of Vance Smith.

► [Art Thompson Goes After John McManus](#)

► [My Reply to John Fall's 3/06 Ltr](#)

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Another example of the irrational thinking in the insane asylum is the criticism that we ◊should have stayed the course, remaining part of the team, offering advice and assistance.◊ That is simply ridiculous! There was no ◊team◊ when we were trying to reason with Jack McManus and the others to prevent the unraveling of what Mr. Welch had built.

To realize the absurdity of this latest attempt at self-purification, imagine an obvious drunk taking the keys to the car while insisting that, despite your pleadings, he is going to drive. You refuse to accompany him. And then, after he wrecks the car, he accuses you of not being a team player and not having the interest of the car at heart, because you wouldn◊t ride with him and give him advice.

One last point

It is obvious that there is no hands-on leadership in Appleton. Several people have revealed that neither Jack McManus nor Art Thompson stay in Appleton for more than a few days at a time. Nevertheless, those who wrote the January 26th letter state:

CEO Art Thompson has resided in Appleton since the leadership change was made.... John McManus is working under the same arrangement that he had under G. Vance Smith in that he lives in Massachusetts and frequently travels all over the country on JBS business.... He also travels to Appleton once each month and spends a full week at headquarters.

It was not G. Vance Smith ◊ it was the Executive Committee ◊ who approved Jack◊s desire to live in Massachusetts. We did so because Jack was only a figurehead ◊President◊ with no administrative responsibilities.

It would seem the situation is quite different, today. Jack has now elevated himself to the top man in the JBS world by appointing himself Chairman of the Board of Incorporators. He and his small group of ◊incorporators◊ now have total authority when it comes to JBS directors and officers. No, things are quite different now.

And regarding Art Thompson, a motel down on the corner does not qualify as a ◊residence◊ in anyone◊s book. The reports that we◊ve received are that during the past 15 months, neither of these men can be found in Appleton more than a few days at a time. (It is interesting that the Appleton people who signed the letter did not notice that ◊ or did they?)

Nevertheless, the real issues are leadership and the health and welfare of The John Birch Society. Through our own experience and from observing JBS leaders from Robert Welch down to G. Vance Smith, we know that running the Society takes hands-on, day-to-day leadership, and we know that the JBS members are not presently getting it. The bottom line ◊ with no qualified or dedicated leadership in Appleton, The John Birch Society cannot and will not succeed.

We must move on

As we said in our letter of December 28th, it is time to move onward and upward. Those who have subverted the JBS are now in over their heads. After 15 months of covering one falsehood with another, they have painted themselves into a corner from which no freedom fight can possibly be waged or won. They are obsessed with their fabricated stories to the point that they will never let go until the Society is, in fact, in ruins.

Without the Society, we must do something and very soon if patriotic Americans are going to be able to work together to preserve freedom. As we move on to expand the RWU Freedom Committee, we intend to start modestly and within our means. As in the past, we will support Vance Smith and Tom Gow as they and their small staff begin to build what we believe will ultimately be a large and effective Robert Welch principle-centered organization.

Nevertheless, for this fresh start to succeed we must also learn from the past. As our friend Don Fotheringham has often stated: ♦ If we are serious about attracting sufficient numbers of truly patriotic Americans, especially the younger generation, the [future] paid staff must be kept ♦ lean, mean, and clean.♦♦

With the online university and the separate RWU Freedom Committee, there is no reason to stay in Appleton, Wisconsin. Yes, we are presently looking at Colorado Springs, Colorado as an appropriate place to establish our headquarters. Just as there was wisdom years ago in moving from Belmont, Massachusetts, to Appleton, Wisconsin, there are now ample positive reasons for moving somewhere else. Not the least is that this fast growing and desirable city is a place where we can attract the right talent to build an effective 21st century staff.

And, even though the ♦inmates♦ are obsessed with the notion, Vance Smith♦s retirement is not one of the considerations for the suggested location. His purported retirement is only a hoped-for dream of those in Appleton, and will not take place for many years to come.

Our goals are clear and straightforward. It will take a few months before the RWU Freedom Committee will be ready to accept membership applications, etc., but all our time and resources will be focused on that objective.

If you would like to be a part of this transition to what will surely be a dynamic and ♦epic undertaking,♦ we would be grateful for your help. Such a significant and ambitious effort will need the help and support of all who are willing.

We have asked Kathy Braun to include a return envelope with this letter, and we will greatly appreciate any gift to the RWU Freedom Committee

that you may wish to make at this time. (Gifts for the Freedom Committee are not tax-deductible. Of course, tax-deductible gifts in support of Robert Welch University's online program are also very much welcome and needed.)

Thank you for the support you've shown for our shared concern regarding the mission and principles Robert Welch laid as foundation stones for The John Birch Society. Thank you in advance for your help in preserving them in a truly effective organization that a younger generation can use in carrying this great cause forward.

And as Robert Welch wrote in February 1974, let's do what we can do to restore some sanity to a **world** that seems to be losing both its mind and its heart.♦

Sincerely,

Wayne C. Rickert

C. Walter Ruckel

Keith Van Buskirk

P.S. For those wishing to know the truth and have their questions answered regarding the events within JBS these past many months, we are including with this letter an extremely important booklet written by Tom Gow. We hope you will find it helpful.

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Call to Action by Former Executive Committee Members

An October 16, 2006 letter signed by three former veteran members of the JBS Executive Committee is creating quite a stir. In their letter, Wayne Rickert, Walt Ruckel, and Keith Van Buskirk lay out the inside story of how they were forced out by the coup a year earlier at JBS. In their letter, they also explain why that coup, if allowed to stand, will soon destroy any hope

Mr. Welch gave us when he founded a uniquely effective, principle-centered organization.

Their letter requests feedback via an attached form while urging all who agree to join in putting pressure on the Council, Jack McManus, and Art Thompson to undo the structural damage, reinstate the authority of the Executive Committee as it was previously constituted, and get the Society back on the track laid down for it by Mr. Welch.

● [Letter from Wayne, Walt, & Keith](#)

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December 28, 2006

Dear Friends and Fellow Patriots,

As another year comes to a close, Walt Ruckel, Keith Van Buskirk, and I wish to update you regarding the sad happenings at The John Birch Society. And we want to inform you of some tough decisions and some very forward looking plans we intend to advance in 2007.

The objective of our October 16, 2006 letter was to alert you to what had really happened in October 2005 when G. Vance Smith, Tom Gow, and we on the JBS Executive Committee were forced out. The overwhelmingly positive response we received from you indicates that we succeeded in getting our message clearly understood by most of you.

While the responses to our letter from hundreds of you great patriots were so positive and encouraging, there were some who drew the conclusion that this was just a turf war between out-of-control egotists. Therefore, we want to write a few lines to help those who have this concern better understand what truly happened.

Although through the years there were several attempted coups, even in the days of Robert Welch, this is the first time in our history a coup was not put down before it was consummated. You, all the JBS members, and we, your former Executive Committee members, are now the victims of a successful takeover. The subversion of the JBS was at least a year in the planning, and those of us in authority did not know it was coming until it was too late to prevent it and too late to warn you about it.

In September 2005, when we learned what was happening and attempted to stop it, we soon found that the deck was stacked and that the coup leaders had successfully lulled Jack McManus and his JBS Board of Incorporators into their camp. The mechanics for the ♦corporate♦ takeover were in place. Two JBS salaried employees ♦Jack McManus and Larry Waters ♦and a former employee and co-religionist with Jack ♦John Fall ♦were all set to pull the plug on the JBS. They did that on October 21, 2005 ♦eight days before these issues would have been appropriately dealt with at a Council Meeting in Orlando, Florida.

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Since that time every word you have received from the headquarters of the JBS has been the voice of those who have overturned the legitimate leadership and placed themselves at the head. The confusion you may have experienced comes from the fact that the takeover team controls all JBS media and has told you what they want you to believe. Now, since we have written to you, they are desperately trying to look legitimate and make you think that we, not they, are the dissenters.

As you well know, Robert Welch did not establish an organization to be run by a Board of Incorporators, or by the vote of three staff and former staff people, or by the vote of any number of people at any level. The JBS was to be strictly a monolithic system for reasons that he thoroughly explained in The Blue Book and which he repeatedly emphasized in the pages of the JBS Bulletin. Until the present takeover, the structure Mr. Welch established had been sacredly honored and upheld.

Leader replacement in the Society had always been, and should always be, decided privately by the Executive Committee of the Council. The appointment of a leader was entrusted to men who were proven leaders in the business world, men not apt to be hoodwinked by phonies or ego-driven opportunists. There was never to be any struggle for office. Leadership changes were not to be decided by popular opinion.

In violating this principle, the coup leaders not only employed unconscionable means, but their immediate ends were also unimaginably irresponsible. To gain a little temporary prestige or relieve some pressures at work these employees were willing to lop off the Society♦s head and leave the Society without any day-to-day Birch leadership at its headquarters.

As we stated in the opening sentences of this letter, we have made some tough decisions in the wake of this obvious lack of leadership and outright disregard for Robert Welch and the founding principles of the Society.

Since October 2005, the three of us ♦ Walt Ruckel, Keith Van Buskirk, and I ♦ have served as trust officers for an endowment trust that holds a ♦restrictive covenant♦ prohibiting the present JBS leaders from mortgaging the two JBS headquarters buildings without permission from the trust. As many of you know, we the trust officers, as well as RWU, are being sued by JBS to dissolve the trust and release the restrictive covenant.

When the buildings were purchased in 1995, the JBS donors and members were assured that the buildings would not be mortgaged or sold to pay operating costs of the organization. We made certain that was the case from 1995 until we were forced out in October 2005. Further, for the past 14 months and because of the endowment trust and restrictive covenant, we have kept the present incompetent JBS leaders from squandering these assets.

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[Takes Glenn Schmitz to the Woodshed](#)

► [Tom Gow Responds to Report in August JBS Bulletin](#)

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We feel, by doing what we did, we have accomplished our mission. We have kept the JBS buildings from being mortgaged or sold, and we have had these many months to advise you, thousands of you, so that you can voice your opinions before any irresponsible actions to strip the Society of its building assets are taken.

On Monday, December 11, 2006, we sent a settlement proposal to the JBS lawyers for JBS consideration regarding this issue. It was a fair and equitable offer to settle. On Wednesday, December 20, 2006, and not surprisingly, our offer was flatly turned down.

From the beginning of this imbroglio, we have tried to reason with what we always understood were the ♦powers that be♦ ♦the Council. Sadly, the responses from this group of what should be ♦watchmen on the tower♦ have been virtually nonexistent ♦with the exception of the two stalwarts ♦ G. Allen Bubolz and General Gatsis ♦ mentioned in the enclosed letter.

On November 20, 2006, we sent a letter to that ♦esteemed♦ body. And, once again, the response from the Council was complete and absolute silence ♦not even a phone call. As you can see by that letter, here enclosed, we promised it would go to you if they did not respond. We hope you will take time to read it so that you can see our efforts have been sincere in trying to get the men ♦ the Council ♦ to act, and not just be acted upon.

Since the men on the Council have refused to act or offer any support, we have decided to bow out and turn over the job of protecting the JBS assets to the current JBS Executive Committee, Board of Directors, and members. Since the current JBS ♦leaders♦ have already nearly decimated the Society, they can now stand or fall on their own weight regarding their ability to survive financially. As Life Members and former financial contributors, we are going to continue to apply pressure, but if the JBS membership intends to preserve the building assets, they will need to do their part in keeping their present leaders on a short leash.

Today, December 28, 2006, our attorney has advised the JBS legal counsel that the trust is being turned over to the current appointees of Art and Jack on the Executive Committee of the Council, and that we will no longer have a vote in protecting those assets.

With that done, Art and Jack♦s appointees will decide among themselves whether to violate the promises made to members and donors who paid for the JBS headquarters buildings that the buildings would never be mortgaged or sold to pay operations expenses.

We have decided that we are moving forward to higher ground in the freedom fight.

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► [My Reply to John Fall's 3/06 Ltr](#)

► [My Reply to JBS Staff Reaction](#)

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Under the proven leadership of Vance Smith, Tom Gow, and their team, we are going to engage the real enemies of freedom ◇ the Insiders ◇ with information and action programs that will initially be published in the ◇RWU Freedom Report.◇

Robert Welch founded an organization, The John Birch Society, in a carefully thought-out manner so that it could last for decades, if not hundreds of years. The tragic changes made to the fundamental structure of the Society by those who orchestrated the coup have left the Society permanently and irreparably damaged ◇ unless the wrongs are righted soon.

Please understand, our commitments have not changed, only our course of action. Our fundamental preference is to see the Society become, once again, a principle-centered organization led by principle-centered and capable leadership. That is by far the best outcome. However, the tactics of those currently in charge at JBS are clear and unmistakable. In order to protect the salaries of a few at the top, they will keep peeling off staff, especially Coordinators, until the JBS as we◇ve known it will be completely decimated.

Rather than our just waiting for that to happen, we have decided to move forward in giving sound leadership as aggressively as time and resources will allow. By our offering positive, correct leadership, we hope that many more veteran JBS members may come to recognize the contrast and either work to fix JBS if they can or support us. But we intend to begin doing what absolutely must be done to save our country ◇ help enlighten and give guidance to thousands of American patriots totally outside the present Birch orbit.

It is obvious to us that those presently running the JBS have what is commonly referred to as ◇Home-office-itis.◇ They have lost sight of the most important ingredient in the freedom fight ◇ the member. There are two very important standards that any JBS leadership must be judged by (these standards were both fundamental in the thinking of Robert Welch):

1. Is The John Birch Society providing responsible, credible leadership exposing the Conspiracy◇s grip on our nation? Or has it backed off into less controversial areas in an effort to become popular? In other words, are the Society◇s leaders sounding the alarm or have they lost the determination and courage to rock the boat?

2. Is the emphasis on building an organization of patriots (members and Chapters) who are exposing the Conspiracy to their friends and neighbors through well-supported concerted action campaigns and who are acting as opinion molders in their communities to advocate and defend the proper role of government and the principles of freedom? Or is the emphasis on what the headquarters is doing, a magazine, or a website?

Larry McDonald in his speech ♦Education is the Key♦ described these two radically different kinds of organizations. He said The John Birch Society was the sole representative of the former, akin to a pyramid with the members serving as the base. The other, very common, marginally effective organization could be represented by an upside down pyramid where the member♦s role was merely to send money to support the leadership (♦fundraisers♦) at the top, who would, time permitting, exercise what little real influence the organization had in Washington. Larry understood this reality from direct experience as a member of Congress.

Building a nationwide organization of active patriots is absolutely essential to defeat the Conspiracy and preserve freedom. Half-hearted efforts by uninformed Americans supporting a politician or a newsletter or spokesman for a beltway office can♦t possibly do the job.

If The John Birch Society is not going to build a strong membership- and chapter-based organization established on the basic principles set forth by Robert Welch that can change the course of history, then another organization must be built that will step forward and do just that.

Regardless of the terrible upheaval at the Society caused by those now running it, the true and important work of stopping the Conspiracy and preserving our civilization still lies before us.

The days and hours we now live in are as fraught with peril and disaster as great as any time in our nation♦s history. In fact, now more than ever is the time to bring thousands and tens of thousands of new people into Mr. Welch♦s ♦epic undertaking.♦ We simply must, with or without The John Birch Society, move the freedom fight forward, and we hope you will participate with us in relentlessly striving to bring about ♦ ♦less government, more responsibility, and with God♦s help, a better world.♦

Sincerely,

Wayne C. Rickert

C. Walter Ruckel

Keith Van Buskirk

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Don Fotheringham

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28 March 2007

Dear Chick [Heileson],

When you get some spare time would you please call me so we can sit down and visit.

I received a fund raising letter from Art Thompson dated March 16th. After reading his letter along with other material he has disseminated I find it hard to understand how good people like you, Dale, and Bliss [all JBS Coordinators] can continue to work for a man like him?

In case you haven't seen his latest March 16th fund raising letter I will enclose for you a copy along with this letter.

Are you convinced that Art is a leader that can guide us through the perilous times we have ahead of us? After all, he is one of the co-conspirators the Society ended up as CEO because of a smear campaign, a successful underhanded coup, and a 3-to-2 vote of the board of incorporators!

Art now has The John Birch Society ♦fighting people♦ instead of issues and exposing the Conspiracy to the light of day, as outlined by Robert Welch. ♦We are not fighting issues, we are fighting people♦. Pg1 paragraph 3 Fighting people? Something about that stand-alone phrase that is repulsive to me. I have been taught all my life to hate the sin, not the sinner. How about you?

I hardly know where to begin, but let me say that Wayne Rickert was right when he called Art a ♦cloak and dagger guy.♦ First Art ♦hinted♦ in the March bulletin that he is about to launch ♦a new major campaign that we [believe] will strike at the heart of what the insiders have in store for America.....♦ Then he announces his plans to repeal NAFTA in this fundraiser, saying he didn't want to ♦telegraph♦ our moves too soon. His reason, Chick, was because the Bulletin is read by ♦other than just membership♦! Imagine that! Others read our Bulletins and he doesn't want the enemy to know our plans! What kind of game are these guys in Appleton playing? Art doesn't want the enemy to know our plans!

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Is Art Thompson operating with a full deck of cards? What is he turning The John Birch Society into, a secret society?

Robert Welch was always honest and open and laid out a plan of action for the whole world to see. Mr. Welch gave us the blueprint and it has been followed until the ♦keystone kops♦ took control in October 2005. Whenever a major campaign was launched, it had been planned, organized, with material printed and was up and running and ready for the membership to take action. Contrast that with Art Thompson and his team's approach. ♦But first we need to plan the campaign, and build tools, to reach as many people as possible♦.What? ♦plan, formulate and build?♦ We are looking to you, our faithful members, to help us formulate and build this campaign.♦ Pg.4 paragraph 9 Am I reading this right? Art, the leader, is asking the members to ♦formulate♦ the plan? That is democracy in action, Mr. Welch must be rolling over!

Mr. Heilson, what is Art saying? Do you know? Is he really telling us they just have an idea, but they haven't already formulated a plan to carry it out? ♦We will return to you again [for money] to help us implement this plan ♦once it comes together.♦ Pg.4 paragraph 9 Here comes more ♦cloak and dagger? stuff: ♦We are taking a chance by 'letting the cat out of the bag' before we are ready to launch.♦ Pg.4 paragraph 9 WHAT IN THE WORLD IS ART TALKING ABOUT? Is he planning a sneak attack on the Conspiracy? Yeah right! How utterly asinine! Chick, doesn't it embarrass you to be working for a guy like that?

Repealing NAFTA ♦...is more important than our ♦Get US out of the United Nations♦ campaign? What? Is Art suggesting we have presently won the ♦Get US Out♦ campaign ♦...because the American people either lost confidence in the UN or they understand the danger of the UN to such an extent that they will not accept UN controls at this time.♦ HOGWASH! Again, does Art think we are a bunch of morons that will buy that line?

♦[I]f we do not repeal NAFTA.....we might just as well fold up our tents and go home♦. Now if that isn't dynamic leadership, I don't know what is? Imagine Robert Welch, or any leader for that matter, stating that if we don't succeed in this one campaign, we might as well turn off the lights, and shut down the organization. Is there no one♦John McManus or someone else with even a little common sense♦that could proof read Art's writing in order to save him and the Society such unnecessary embarrassment. Art goes on, to repeal NAFTA will ♦strike at the heart of the insiders.♦ Pg. 5 paragraph 7 Are we now putting all our eggs in that basket? I cannot believe he said that! Those guys in Appleton need to go back and re-read the *Blue Book*, if they ever did, or even have one.

Chick, all we get from Art and company are promises. His grand plans are always for the future. First, he and Jack promised to resurrect the ♦Support Your Local Police♦ committee. Then they were promising to restore the ♦TACT♦ and ♦MOTOREDE♦ committees. And, at the top

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of that promise list, but no results list, was a national radio program! Do they think we members are so stupid that we can't remember all their hollow promises?

If he would have taken the \$100,000 he spent on his packet of nonsense (another promise that didn't go anywhere) and put that money into the NAU campaign he probably wouldn't have to make such an urgent appeal for funds. Art, Jack, Larry, Alan, Chris and the present Council have dealt a serious blow to the freedom battle, and all their high talking ♦promises♦ and plans for the future will fizzle, just like that wasteful, worthless and expensive marketing packet of nonsense.

Now, what about the ♦attack♦ on The John Birch Society? What is Art talking about? The only ♦attack♦ I am aware of took place back in the 60's and 70's by the insiders, and again in October of 2005 by the ♦board of incorporators♦. The October 2005 ♦attack♦ orchestrated by Art Thompson, destroyed the monolithic structure of The John Birch Society which had been established by Robert Welch, and was used to oust the legitimate leadership of the Executive Committee and CEO Vance Smith. Now that was an attack! There was a difference in the attacks described above. The conspiracy insiders were not successful, the Birch insiders were.

I have followed the controversy of the past year very closely, and Art nor anyone else can show me where The John Birch Society has been under attack. There have been no ♦attacks♦ on The John Birch Society! That is just another one of Arts fabricated lies. Sure, Art Thompson, John McManus and others have come under attack as individuals because of their illegal acts of breaking and entering into the RWU building and for altering the monolithic structure of The John Birch Society. Anyone who has been paying any attention at all to what happened knows The John Birch Society is not under attack.

One final thing, Art and Jack would melt like butter if they had to stand face to face with Vance and Wayne and Walt and Keith in front of the members and explain what happened.

I know you have heard the phrase, scripture, mingled with the philosophy of men. Everytime I read Art quoting Robert Welch in his ♦new and improved bulletin♦ and fund raising letters, that kind of hypocrisy is exactly what I think of.

Sincerely,

Rusty Barlow

Copies to: Dale Pearce, Bliss Tew, Art Thompson, John McManus, Others

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RWU wins lawsuit!

The leaders of Robert Welch University (G. Vance Smith, Wayne Rickert, Walt Ruckel, and Tom Gow) won their lawsuit to retain control of RWU. The Defendants were several individuals, mostly among the new leaders at the John Birch Society, who attempted to seize control of RWU by force based on a contested board meeting. In awarding summary judgment to the plaintiffs, Judge Luebke wrote in part:

◆ Therefore, under either of the only viable conclusions to be reached in this case, defendants are unable to validate, under the governing rules of RWU, their right or entitlement to do as they did in their efforts to wrest control of RWU from the plaintiffs, or to otherwise justify their efforts on equitable grounds. As such, plaintiffs◆ motion for summary judgment as to liability issues is granted, subject to trial on damages, if any, they may be entitled to.◆

A few days later, in exchange for RWU giving up its claim for damages, a global settlement was worked out, in which the JBS leaders agreed to drop their claims brought against G. Vance Smith, Tom Gow, Wayne Rickert, Walt Ruckel, Keith Van Buskirk, and RWU. The only legal issue still under dispute is the validity of the trust holding a restrictive covenant on the JBS buildings.

Supporters of JBS and RWU should be pleased that the *legal* battles draining these two organizations are virtually ended. This does not mean, however, that any of the views of the disputing parties have been reconciled, particularly about what needs to be done at JBS to lead the freedom fight to victory.

Please check back frequently as I intend to continue providing insight and information relative to both JBS and RWU.

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Paradigm UnShift Still Needed

by Tom Gow

Art and the bureaucrats in Appleton still haven't got the message: ♦It♦s the member (and Chapter), stu***!♦ (See earlier ♦[Paradigm UnShift Needed](#).♦)

Although we strongly disagree with several arguments in ♦Chicken Little ♦ Wrong Again!,♦ Art Thompson♦s front-page article for the February 2007 *JBS Bulletin*, we focus our attention here for a moment on one easily overlooked, but self-indicting ♦slip.♦

Continuing on the back page of the *Bulletin*, Art♦s article includes this observation: ♦The current letters and other communications are attempting to convince our members, and especially our donors, that a huge split exists in our ranks. This is not true, the primary reason being that there is now complete harmony among present members of our management team. The dissenting opinions all originate from outside our organization.♦

Read it twice! Note the huge jump in subject: There is no huge split in our ranks, because ♦there is now complete harmony among present members of our management team.♦ Since when has management team harmony been a measurement of organizational unity? Members certainly aren't contacting headquarters because they are concerned that the Appleton bureaucrats might not see eye to eye.

Members look to the *Bulletin*, and to their Coordinator (the few who still have one), for direction and inspiration. The percentage

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of satisfied headquarter employees drawing a paycheck is really not a traditional concern of members.

Let's say it again: The John Birch Society is a body of members (almost all of whom are in the field). These members were recruited into the Society so that they could work more effectively in the cause of freedom. They are the ones who must undertake the critical work of opposing the Conspiracy and building the JBS body of Americanists to a sufficient size for victory. While the home office operation must provide critical leadership and support, it is the efforts and influence of the members in the field that ultimately matter.

It is easy to understand how headquarters employees of any membership organization may take the distant member in the field ◆ the one who sends donations, buys the books, and does the vital volunteer work ◆ for granted and come to think of the organization as merely the fellow employees he sees everyday. But those who represent themselves as an organization's leaders have no excuse for that kind of thinking!

Another observation: The overthrow team incorrectly tries to characterize our opinions as ◆ dissenting.◆ They are the true dissenters. The opinions of those who question the legitimacy of their coup and its tactics may well ◆ all ◆ have originated ◆ from outside our [JBS] ranks,◆ but only because the true dissenters have revoked our Life Memberships, not because we resigned our memberships. Moreover, our opinions are now shared by many others who are still considered members.

As another aside, we don't recall letters ever suggesting that there was a huge split in member ranks ◆ only that there was a sizeable group who agreed with us and were unhappy with how the leadership change was brought about. However, it's obvious from the attention devoted in the February *Bulletin* to the topic of critical letters that many members have been asking tough questions of the ◆ functional leaders◆ in Appleton, whoever they may be.

Have we overreacted again? Was this paragraph just another slip of some ghost writer's pen? One might reasonably answer, yes ◆ if there were no other evidence pointing to this mindset.

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But in the wake of the well publicized criticism of Art's earlier paradigm boggle (see "[Paradigm UnShift Needed](#)" on this website) and the corroborating evidence cited therein, this latest blunder confirms that the bureaucratic mentality is well entrenched in Appleton.

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Tom Gow Rebuts Takeover Team's Spin on Coup

February 8, 2007

To: Whom it may concern

From: Tom Gow

Subject: An Unholy Mix: Christmas Message Gone Awry

Last December, Jack McManus wrote the Council to wish them a merry Christmas. His letter included thoughts about the significance of that Holy day and of the nature of offense and atonement.

But Jack didn't leave it at that. In the middle of a Christmas message, he chose to insert unsubstantiated optimism regarding the Society's future. And he further enclosed a document attempting to justify the coup he helped instigate of a year earlier.

In his letter, Jack wrote: **◆The past year has been a very trying one, yet a time for optimism. Our beloved Society is securely on track. There are many opportunities for it to grow and become the kind of force needed to reverse the disastrous course being chartered for our nation.◆**

Did Jack have his fingers crossed when he wrote that the Society was securely on track? How can he say that? What track? Does he even know, as he lives in Massachusetts and throughout the years has only infrequently participated in the Society's leadership?

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Glib assurances roll easily off of the pens of the Society♦'s current title holders. In a March 10, 2006 letter to selected donors, JBS CEO Art Thompson wrote: ♦Let me assure you that the Society has not been taken over, but is in the care of those who have served it the longest, who love its principles, and who will continue the legacy of our founder, Robert Welch.♦

♦... love its principles ... continue the legacy of our founder....♦
What blatantly dishonest lip service! A few months earlier, Jack and Art conspired to overthrow the authority structure Mr. Welch had put in place. And less than a year later, they refuse to republish the *Blue Book*! If members want the *Blue Book* they are now being told they have to download it from the JBS website.

No, the Society is being run by a few people more concerned about their paychecks, their titles, and their job environment than the freedom fight. Opportunities for the Society to grow *do* exist, but they will not be seized by leadership with such misguided priorities.

Nor will that leadership be readily fixed within the subverted structure where Jack is now virtually unaccountable to anyone.

Jack concludes his message to the Council with this postscript:
♦The enclosed ♦Ten Points....♦ may be useful. Don♦t hesitate to share a copy as the need arises.♦

Incredibly, Jack fails to identify the author of the ♦Ten Points.♦ Nor does the document itself identify an author or even a publication date to establish a point of reference. Yet Jack is suggesting that the men on the JBS Council take a leadership role in quieting the troops based on what is stated therein.

In the weeks following, ♦someone♦ expanded several of the ♦Ten Points♦ and added two more. The ♦Twelve Points♦ version, with another cover letter signed by Jack, has been sent to selected members who have contacted JBS headquarters as a result of the Rickert, Ruckel, and Van Buskirk letters.

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Those who have seized power at JBS are increasingly being called to account for their deeds. ♦Twelve Points♦ is one defense. More reaction from the takeover team appears on the front page of the February 2007 *JBS Bulletin*. Unfortunately, these reactions to member concerns are disappointing, if not surprisingly ♦ the coup leaders steadfastly continue to defend their irresponsible actions with more of the same ♦ distortions, misrepresentations, self-serving accusations, and invented history.

With such leadership firmly ensconced, we see no hope for JBS. That♦s why we have reluctantly announced our intention to move on and form a new organization to give leadership in the freedom fight.

Nevertheless, for the record and for the member wrestling to get at the truth, let♦s take a look at the document entitled **♦Twelve Points to Consider About the 2005 Changes in Leadership at JBS.♦**

Note: The author of ♦Twelve Points♦ is still not identified, although it is obvious to those familiar with Jack♦s stylistic proclivities that he was involved in the editing of both versions. (The expanded ♦latest♦ version also carries no publication date.)

♦Twelve Points to Consider About the 2005 Changes in Leadership at JBS♦ by the JBS Takeover Team (specific author not identified)

Rebuttal by Tom Gow (02-08-07)

♦1. The Board of Incorporators (BOI) did not remove Mr. Smith and Mr. Gow from their positions, nor did it remove Messrs. Rickert, Ruckel and Van Buskirk from the Executive Committee. They all resigned.♦

That♦s like an accused arsonist claiming that the fire he started

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didn't kill the people who jumped out of a fifth story window to escape the resulting raging inferno. In reality, the arsonist insists, it was the fall which his victims undertook voluntarily.

The Board of Incorporators had made clear its intention to pull the authority to choose the Society's leader away from the Executive Committee and was only hours away from doing so when these men resigned. In the days leading up to this event, the coup leaders had insulted Messrs. Rickert, Ruckel, and Van Buskirk and refused to let the Executive Committee exercise its well established responsibility to deal with the complaints, as it was scheduled to do in Orlando.

The coup leaders had conjured up a phony crisis to undermine the resistance of the Council to this unprecedeted intervention by the Board of Incorporators. The doomsayers insisted that the Board of Incorporators couldn't wait even eight days to see how the Executive Committee would handle the complaints.

Realistically, Jack and Art knew they had to act if they wanted to seize the leadership for themselves, so they created a climate to smooth the way with many on the Council (at least temporarily) for their unprecedeted, self-serving action.

1. continued: They were not forced out via an illegal coup as has been claimed. The JBS Bylaws, created and approved by Vance Smith, explicitly state in Section 1 that all authority, rights, powers and duties shall be possessed by, vested in, and exercised exclusively by the Board of Incorporators....◆◆

Here, the author seems to admit (as he confirms in point #2) that we were forced out, but he now implies that overturning the succession structure established by Mr. Welch was legal, even okay, because of corporate authority found in the JBS Bylaws.

We are not asserting that the Board of Incorporators' action was illegal. And neither are we affirming that it was legal. Over the years, Mr. Welch had helped build a membership organization, and obtained financial support for it, with the explicit understanding that the Executive Committee of the Council would choose the leader. Members were never asked to

join an organization ruled by a Board of Incorporators, nor were members of the Council recruited with that understanding. The actual public commitments and understandings and the established procedures *also* carry weight in determining what is legal.

What we *are* asserting, however, is that, legal or not, the action by the Board of Incorporators was an irresponsible, unconscionable violation of trust. Just because something may be legal doesn't mean it's right. Suppose, for example, that the Board of Incorporators could legally decide that the Society was no longer interested in the freedom fight and vote to shut down the Society and disband it. Such action would clearly be irresponsible and an incredible betrayal of those who had supported it.

Had former Society president Thomas N. Hill, Robert Welch's closest confidant and right-hand man for 25 years, still been alive, we are absolutely convinced that Jack McManus would never have gotten away with his Incorporator coup. At the time of Mr. Hill's passing in October of 2003 (two years before the coup), Mr. Hill was a member of both the Executive Committee and the Board of Incorporators.

It *is* true that the JBS bylaws were amended in 1993 under the leadership of G. Vance Smith. But the changes reflected the advice of counsel and had the unanimous support of the entire Council and the Board of Incorporators at the time.

In trying to justify their irresponsible takeover, the coup leaders have variously suggested that Mr. Welch wanted the Board of Incorporators to serve as a watchdog over the Executive Committee (although they can produce nothing in writing from Mr. Welch to confirm their contention) or that this authority stemmed from actions Mr. Smith undertook in 1993. They should not be allowed to have it both ways. Or either way, actually.

For more comments regarding the Board of Incorporators, please also see my responses to points # 4 and #7, below.

2. The Board of Incorporators would have removed Mr.

Smith if he hadn't resigned because the Society's senior staff and many Council members were prepared to offer their resignations if he wasn't replaced.

The intention of the Board of Incorporators is undisputed, but the reason given as justification here is fabricated history. This claim has never been established. It is correct that several senior staff members were persuaded *by the coup leaders* to call for Mr. Smith's resignation. However, *if* senior men were truly prepared to offer their resignations, it was only because the coup leaders had callously led them to that point in order to have an alarming pretext for their backdoor route to gain power for themselves.

It's conceivable that those calling for Mr. Smith's resignation may have felt that such action would have cost them their jobs, but they never stated their intention to resign to anyone who communicated it to us prior to October 20th. However, in contrast to these unverified claims of impending resignations, several veteran staff members actually *did* resign as a result of the Board of Incorporators' coup.

Other senior staff such as Gary Benoit and Tom Gow went on record in opposition to the coup tactics. An obvious plan of the coup leaders was to orchestrate a crisis that would appear to demand immediate action. So for several weeks they worked long and hard to persuade selected employees to write letters of dissatisfaction and others to resign or provoke Mr. Smith into firing them. We were well aware of the latter tactic and refused to bite.

Even after the takeover, Alan Scholl continued the tactic and persuaded/coerced a majority of home office employees to sign a letter stating that they would resign if Mr. Smith were reinstated. With perhaps one or two exceptions, none of these office employees were even aware of the crisis that was brewing until a few days before the leadership change. They certainly weren't part of the demand for a change. Yet after the takeover, Alan managed to make it appear that they, too, were on the verge of resigning. Similarly, we suspect, the coup leaders, following the tactics of the left, orchestrated a greatly exaggerated appearance of mass demand for a change in

leadership among the field.

The allegation regarding the Council is even more suspect. There were plenty of discussions with Council members during October of 2005, and while several suggested that Mr. Smith resign, we never heard one threaten to resign or even that one had so threatened should Mr. Smith not resign.

In fact, the allegation regarding the Council is pretty absurd on the face of it. Most Council members were as unaware as we were of the brewing storm and had no personal grievances. A few had decided to become advocates for what they had been told by disgruntled employees. But no threats of resignation by Council members, even by key coup leaders Art Crino and Cliff Wasem, were ever delivered.

2. continued: ♦All were painfully aware that the Society wasn♦t growing and had lost influence.♦

The revolutionaries who are at pains to justify what they did to The John Birch Society are again inventing history. Whom is the author referring to with his impressive sounding ♦all♦? Grammatically, it appears to be ♦the Society♦'s senior staff and many Council members.♦

Undoubtedly, the Society♦'s senior staff and its field staff were aware that the Society wasn♦t growing. Mr. Smith♦'s office was supplying them with the numbers and the graphs, and Mr. Smith himself was trying to help them set goals and do something about it.

The statement, however, is cleverly calculated to imply that these ♦all♦ placed the blame on Mr. Smith for this lack of progress. It should be pointed out that many of the coup leaders among the staff were themselves part of the team responsible for the growth rate.

No one was more determined to help the Society grow than Mr. Smith. Growth in recent years was a tough assignment, as every Chapter leader must know. Some initiatives, such as the Single District Coordinator program made great sense in principle but were stymied because of internal staffing problems.

But Mr. Smith never gave up trying to find a better formula, whereas too many of his subordinates were content to coast along with methods that clearly weren't working or to redefine their jobs so that growth was not even an objective. It's hard to imagine that growth was prominent on the radar screen of these individuals.

Talk about the pot calling the kettle black. It would be interesting to know what growth rate the Society has enjoyed since October 2005 now that the management team is supposedly so committed and happy. Or perhaps, the coup leaders have decided to blame us for their lack of success. Immediately prior to our resignations in October 2005, we predicted among ourselves that the new leaders, whoever they might be, would look to use us as scapegoats for their lack of success. For in order to gain power, the coup leaders were clearly overselling what they could expect to accomplish.

The Society's influence was an issue with a few. Some staff felt the measure of our influence was how many times Jack was on C-span or how many talk-show hosts, newsletter writers, or leaders of DC beltway organizations would recognize us. Although headquarters could and should do some PR to help give the Society a national presence, a radio show is no substitute for the influence of Chapter members working in their communities to build an organization of patriots.

And precisely because of Chapter members working in support of our campaigns, the Society continued to enjoy amazing credibility with congressmen despite our disappointing growth rate.

3. Solid reasons for replacing Vance Smith as CEO were actually noted by Mr. Rickert, Mr. Ruckel and Mr. Van Buskirk in their letter sent nationwide on October 16, 2006. They stated: During the George W. Bush years, the organization had become stagnant. It certainly wasn't growing at a rate that would stop the advance of the Conspiracy. They noted that the loss of member strength was evident right before our eyes at Council Dinners and other Birch gatherings. Mr. Smith had been given his

post in 1991 and these three former Executive Committee members could have made a change in JBS leadership, but they didn't act. They even stated that after Mr. Smith had served ten years at the helm, they were aware that field staff personnel ◊were simply doing maintenance work with Birchers who had been around for years.◊ In the corporate world, a change in leadership would have been called for, but Mr. Rickert and his companions did little but note the Society◊s slide.◊

Growth of a principle-based organization that seriously challenges the Conspiracy is a vital, but tough nut to crack. Society leaders have been grappling with the challenge since Mr. Welch◊s day (see, for example, the Project W.I.N. (W)ith (I)ncreased (N)umbers campaigns during the early 1970s).

For most of the 14 plus years Mr. Smith served as the Society◊s CEO, the Executive Committee also included Dr. Philip E. Binzel, Jr., Joseph P. Grinnan, and former JBS President Thomas N. Hill. Both Thomas Hill and Dr. Binzel passed away in mid-to-late 2003 (only two years before the coup), and Mr. Grinnan only two months before the coup. So when the authors of the ◊Twelve Points◊ criticize Mr. Rickert, Mr. Ruckel, and Mr. Van Buskirk for not acting to make a leadership change, they are also criticizing those veterans, as well.

None of the coup leaders, including Jack McManus, sat regularly in these Councils, until Art Crino was appointed to the Executive Committee in 2004 (a year before the coup). In any event, during his one year as a participant on the Executive Committee, coup leader Art Crino made no effort at its meetings to rock the boat. And few of the coup leaders, particularly those with the union ◊local 770◊ mentality, have a clue about how the corporate world runs.

So it is arrogance, to say the least, for the employee who writes this drivel to put himself up as authority above the former Executive Committee: Criticize these men when you have walked in their shoes and have led the Society to the real and spectacular growth it needs. And be certain that, in the process, you have not altered the solid character and tough mission of

the organization.

And don't pat yourself on the back simply because your underhanded tactics succeeded in replacing the authority of the Executive Committee and two of the officers who led the JBS for 14 years with the absentee leadership of Jack McManus and Art Thompson. Is that the needed change in direction you are so proud of?

When the author states that ♦these three former Executive Committee members could have made a change in JBS leadership, but they didn't act,♦ he must mean they didn't act to install Jack and Art as the Society♦s new leaders and that they didn't agree that the Board of Incorporators was justified in taking the responsibility away from the Executive Committee for choosing the Society♦s leader.

At the time of their coup, the coup leaders had no track record of dealing with or even inclination to deal with the serious problems they now feign great concern over. These were hardly their complaints at the time, and it is blatantly self-serving for them to suddenly suggest that these *should* have been reasons for the properly constituted authorities to have replaced Mr. Smith.

3. continued: ♦When others saw the need for change, these three men resisted and launched a divisive campaign full of misrepresentations and falsehoods, even personal attacks against anyone involved in bringing a new direction to the Society.♦

♦When others saw the need for change?♦ [Emphasis added.] This is an audacious euphemism for ♦when a few paid employees decided to organize a mutiny and seize power for themselves!♦

The primary issue here isn't really whether there was a basis for *some* people to question Mr. Smith♦s performance or even whether others had better ideas on how the Society should be run. The issue is whether a few paid employees, including some with less than honorable motives, were justified in making a unilateral decision to overturn the Society♦s organizational structure to install themselves as its leaders.

Simply put, those responsible for the October 21, 2005 change employed less than honorable tactics to defame Mr. Smith and undermine his support while they overturned the Society's organizational structure [its constitutional structure, if you will] all in order to obtain the leadership change they wanted.

Mr. Welch absolutely rejected the revolutionary expedient that good ends justify foul means. He further observed that there are a lot of differences of opinion in this world as to which ends are good.

The unilateral decision of the employee revolutionaries to install themselves by coup d'état was both irresponsible and wrong. Not only have they failed to repent for those actions, but this latest after-the-fact justification demonstrates a continued, arrogant disregard for the truth.

So, we must ask, who is now going to see the need for change and take action? Although Jack and Art have seized power, they have abdicated leadership to Alan Scholl and newcomer Chris Bentley, supported by two non-Birch marketing and PR professionals (one of whom has since been fired). Surely by their own standards, someone should be involved in bringing about a new direction. With the precedent they have established they had better watch their backs.

4. The Executive Committee possessed what has been properly referred to as revocable power granted to it by the BOI.

The Executive Committee exercised power that according to the 1993 revised JBS bylaws *could* be revoked by the Board of Incorporators. But the Executive Committee was never *granted* that power by the B of I, anymore than the States were *granted* their sovereignty by the federal government in Washington.

Prior to 1993, the Executive Committee enjoyed sovereign power to choose the Society's leader. That authority was given to it by Mr. Welch and enhanced through precedent. The change in 1993 occurred because the Executive Committee had stepped in several years earlier, during a time of financial and

leadership turmoil, to assume the role of an additional Board of Directors.

After legal counsel warned of future dangers arising from that structural change, a compromise was worked out with the resurrected Board of Incorporators. This compromise followed a very shaky period in the Society’s history and addressed several concerns. In particular, it attempted to reconcile the procedures established by Mr. Welch (whereby the Executive Committee would choose the Society’s leader) with the statutory authority granted to the corporation’s boards spelled out in the bylaws in conformance with the articles of organization and State of Massachusetts requirements.

With the adoption of the new bylaws, it was expected that the Incorporators would continue to respect the trust given them by Mr. Welch and carry out the statutory requirements *in the background*. At the time, it was further acknowledged that the Board of Incorporators was not qualified to choose the Society’s leader and that if the B of I were ever to contest for that role it would do major damage to the Society by alienating the Executive Committee and the essential confidence of many.

The only justification ever discussed for Board of Incorporator intervention based on statutory authority was the hypothetical event that the Society were hijacked by some wealthy Council member and taken off course from its mission. If that were to happen, it was reasoned, then perhaps the B of I could regain control of the JBS name and membership lists, but it was also understood that the Society would be greatly damaged by any such battle and would undoubtedly have to be rebuilt from the bottom up if such a battle were ever to occur.

It was never suggested that the Board of Incorporators hold veto power or say grace on the decisions of the Executive Committee, as the B of I was not privy to the information for such decisions and its members had not been selected for that purpose or for their wisdom in choosing a leader.

4. continued: ♦When one member of this Committee (Mr. Crino) started asking questions about the condition of the organization in mid-2005, he was speedily removed by the

Rickert-led faction.♦

This is simply more after-the-fact fabrication designed to excuse those who, while purporting to rescue the Society, created the very crisis the Society now faces. Nobody outside a very small group in October 2005 believed the Society needed the kind of surgery they instituted.

♦Speedily removed♦ for merely asking questions? This is absolutely not true, and it is insulting to the other members of the Executive Committee who often asked tough questions, received answers, and continued to serve and provide financial support. This blatant attempt at self-serving revisionism omits the fact that Art Crino, far from merely asking questions, was an active participant in a sub rosa campaign to generate a tide of opposition to Vance Smith, which tide Jack and Art were able to ride into power.

It is not clear how Art Crino got pulled into this role. A year or so earlier, Mr. Crino had attended several days of staff training meetings in Appleton, following which he claimed that he was pleased with what he saw.

Even so, Mr. Smith did not wage a vendetta against Mr. Crino. Mr. Crino was removed from the Council over this episode, but not from membership. In fact, within days of his removal from the Council, Mr. Crino was contacted and, to his credit, agreed to continue his planned speaking tour, walker and all (due to a skiing accident) ♦ with Mr. Smith♦s complete approval.

Moreover, in 2005 there were no *factions* on the Executive Committee, let alone a Rickert-led faction. As recently as 2003, the veterans on the Executive Committee also included Dr. Philip E. Binzel, Jr., Joseph P. Grinnan, and Thomas N. Hill. These men worked well together, but they each had strong opinions. Accordingly, the hidden actions of newcomer Art Crino, revealed in late 2005, came as a total surprise to all. The idea of factions is merely an invention of those who wanted the power to choose the Society♦s leader for themselves.

4. continued: ♦When another Executive Committee member (Mr. Clark) learned that Mr. Crino had been

removed, that a key member of the Council had been ousted from its membership, and that a member of the JBS Board of Directors had been removed without the hearing called for by the legally binding Bylaws, he resigned from the Executive Committee.◆

This is more rewriting of history to justify an irresponsible coup. For months, Ray Clark had begged off from attending Executive Committee meetings because of extreme business pressures, even asking to be excused from Committee membership. The turmoil he was thrust into in October of 2005 may have played a role in hastening his resignation, but, to our knowledge, he has not stated as much.

In any event, it is unlikely that Mr. Clark reacted to ◆a member of the JBS Board of Directors◆ being removed without following proper procedure. Actually, two members of the JBS Board of Directors ◆ Jack and Art ◆ were both removed at the same time, at the same meeting, following the same procedures. If there were a problem with those procedures no one objected to them at the time. This allegation, also made in court documents, is undoubtedly an invention of the same attorneys who squandered so many scarce resources in the RWU contest. Their allegation of improper procedure has never been tested in court.

4. continued: ◆This left only the three (Messrs. Rickert, Ruckel and Van Buskirk) and they refused to act.◆

Even the first part is technically incorrect, as Mr. Smith was also a member of the Executive Committee. And filling the unfortunate vacancies, which included a seat left vacant by the death a month earlier of Joe Grinnan, was a high priority.

But contrary to the claim, the members of the Executive Committee had all decided to act and were acting. They met in Appleton for the better part of a week to deal with the crisis and consulted with many Council members. However, Jack and Art were likely concerned that the results of their orchestrated protest would not lead to Jack and Art being appointed to the top spots.

And properly so. The closest Jack had and has come to a leadership role in The John Birch Society, as opposed to holding a title, was as publisher of *The Review of the News* for a few weeks in 1986. Despite his other talents, Jack really has no history of leading. No one should imagine that actor George C. Scott could have led the Third Army's successful assault on the Nazi occupation of fortress Europe just because his performance in a motion picture as General Patton earned him such wide acclaim.

In any event, the Society desperately needed more leaders, especially new young leaders to come up through the ranks. Since both Jack and Art were aging, since neither lived in Appleton, and since neither had shown leadership promise, as opposed to speaking ability, they could hardly expect the Executive Committee to hand them the top roles. Even less so, since the Executive Committee was well aware that Jack and Art were using a whispering campaign of smear tactics to create pressure for a leadership change under the gun. The last thing Jack and Art wanted was a sit-down discussion in an atmosphere conducive to deliberation by the men responsible to make such a decision.

What the coup leaders mean when they accuse the Executive Committee of refusing to act is that the Committee would not act to replace G. Vance Smith with Jack McManus and Art Thompson.

◆5. Mr. Smith had created an agenda for the October 29th, 2005 Council Meeting that totally ignored the concerns of the senior staff personnel and Council members who were requesting that he step down. As is evident from the agenda he had crafted for that meeting, he intended to use the meeting to launch an attack on anyone who would question his stewardship or who would suggest that he resign. In addition, he had just added several men favorable to him to the Council in hopes of having additional support should the topic of his resignation actually arise at the meeting. These and many other reasons encouraged the Board of Incorporators to proceed with their plan to remove him from his post (which as noted above became unnecessary because of Mr. Smith's resignation).◆

Jack has rightly been on the defensive to explain why his Board of Incorporators did not allow the Council to address the issue in Orlando, as planned. Incredibly, this flimsy excuse provides further evidence that Jack is not really on top of even what is published in his defense. Jack has left it up to uninformed lackeys in Appleton, who have drawn conclusions after looking at files they misunderstand, such as a boiler plate agenda for the next Council meeting.

Wayne Rickert and Keith Van Buskirk personally assured Jack in phone conversations that the allegations against Vance would be the top agenda of the Council meeting in Orlando. Likewise the entire Council was informed of that plan and a two-thirds majority asked Jack to back off with his Incorporator card. Yet Jack stubbornly insisted on going ahead.

This charge includes another of those irresponsible, wild statements that have become a hallmark of the new ♦leadership♦ that wishes to claim Mr. Welch♦s banner of truth and careful research. Since first becoming aware of a brewing mutiny in September of 2005, Mr. Smith had added only one, not ♦several men♦ to the Council ♦ Michael Grinnan, the son of Executive Committee member Joseph Grinnan, who had just passed away. The two prior appointments to the Council were in the previous calendar year ♦ John F. McManus in early 2004 and George B. Wallace in late 2004. Neither supported Mr. Smith in the battle over control that occurred a year later.

So the allegation reduces to this: In order to achieve a more favorable COUNCIL *discussion*, Mr. Smith was allegedly trying to *pack* the Council with his *one* appointment of Michael Grinnan. Contrast these ♦concerns♦ with what actually happened, supposedly as necessary steps to prevent this potentially unfair *discussion* from occurring:

On October 21st, Jack♦s Board of Incorporators intervened to neuter the Executive Committee, alienate key supporters, and overturn the succession structure established by Mr. Welch. On October 21st, Jack♦s Board of Incorporators chose an entirely new Board of Directors, which *immediately acted to appoint* what was undoubtedly a pre-determined slate of new officers

from among the coup leaders: Jack McManus as president, Art Thompson as CEO, and Larry Waters as VP. One can imagine how much discussion occurred when this *obviously packed* Board of Directors met to make its pre-programmed decision.

But of course these self-serving appointments, the earlier underhanded smear tactics, and the resulting structural upheaval were all necessary to save the Society. We should be thankful that the authors of this upheaval were insightful enough to recognize the impending crisis. And we should all be grateful that they were willing to put on their cloaks, combine secretly in the dark of the night, and come to the Society's rescue. Give us a break!

◆6. Completely ignoring the precedent followed by three CEO predecessors (Messrs. Barker, Armour, and Bubolz), Mr. Smith resigned as CEO of JBS but not from all of the posts he had been given. When each of the previous CEOs had been appointed JBS Chief Executive Officer, it was rightly assumed by those making the appointment and everyone else that the single appointment included appointment to each of the Society's related corporations. Later, when each of these three former CEOs resigned, they resigned from the one post and it was rightly assumed that they were stepping away from all of the Society's related corporations. But Mr. Smith ignored this precedent and resigned from his JBS post selectively while determinedly refusing to resign from Robert Welch University and several other entities.◆

Each of Mr. Smith's predecessors, with the exception of Mr. Welch, had been selected by the Executive Committee of the Council with the approval of the Council. That was Mr. Welch's plan and the precedent that was broken when Jack's Board of Incorporators intervened to appoint, in effect, Jack as the Society's president and Art as its CEO.

Never in the Society's history had its officers ever been appointed, directly or indirectly, by the Board of Incorporators. Never in the Society's history had the Board of Incorporators challenged the authority of the Executive Committee to choose the Society's leader, which authority stemmed from Mr. Welch.

And never in the Society’s history had the Board of Incorporators tried to pull a ♦legal♦ stunt to force out the Society♦s leaders. The Executive Committee and Society leaders were certainly under no obligation to import this revolution into corporations where the JBS Board of Incorporators did not hold even a pretext of authority.

Moreover, none of the corporations ever had an independent payroll and mission prior to a leadership change, as did RWU in October 2005. Having the same leaders (as opposed to control) is not necessarily in the best long-term interests of the two organizations. The plan for RWU had always been that it would grow to where it would need a separate staff, including officers.

RWU was to be kept in the JBS orbit through the men sitting on RWU♦s Board of Trustees ♦ men who were drawn from JBS staff and from the Executive Committee. The unjustified intervention of the JBS Board of Incorporators broke that chain of control. The two organizations could still have worked together, and perhaps eventually can, were it not for the hate campaign against Vance orchestrated by Alan Scholl and other coup leaders.

In reality, the revolutionaries at JBS are merely unhappy with their own failing ♦ they hadn♦t done their homework before they acted ♦ they hadn♦t thought their Board of Incorporators♦ revolution through. And if they truly believe that the two organizations *must* have the same leaders, Jack♦s Board of Incorporators can accomplish that at any time ♦ just roll back the clock.

♦7. Mr. John Fall is the only remaining member of the Board of Incorporators appointed by Robert Welch. He has capably pointed out in his history of the BOI, that Mr. Welch deliberately and quietly kept this board in place so that it could act if needed. Once the Society was functioning, he could have abolished it, but he did not. (Mr. Fall♦s important history of the BOI is available upon request.)♦

Mr. Fall♦s self-serving ♦To Whom It May Concern♦ letter (July 11, 2006), undoubtedly put together at Jack♦s behest and with Jack♦s assistance, has now been elevated here (by Jack?)

to the status of an ◊important history!◊

Mr. Fall, a former head of the membership department in Belmont days, who supported Jack during the October 2005 coup, had earlier arranged for Jack to become an Incorporator ◊ just as the Belmont office was getting ready to close in 1989. Shortly, thereafter Jack boasted to G. Allen Bubolz, the new CEO of JBS at the time, that Jack could deliver the Incorporator vote if Alan needed it (see my August 23, 2006 letter analyzing Mr. John Fall◊s claims).

Mr. Fall is clearly under Jack◊s sway. As an example, in his ◊important history,◊ Mr. Fall writes:

◊... Jack, through his extensive travels and appearances throughout the country, to my mind, exhibited more than anyone else that dynamic personal leadership Mr. Welch has said was so important.◊

Jack has certainly been popular and has sought and cultivated many fans (for himself personally), and John appears to be one of them. But John Fall shouldn◊t confuse the size of Jack◊s fan group with personal dynamic leadership. Even if Jack had a track record of making leadership decisions, which he does not, and even if he were inclined to make such decisions, how could he give the Society the leadership it needed while based in Wakefield, Massachusetts?

Mr. Fall◊s letter was written well after the deed to justify, in the face of criticism, what Jack McManus, John Fall, and Larry Waters had done, as Incorporators, to overturn the long-established authority structure at JBS. Other than the assertions of John Fall and Jack McManus, there is no evidence that Robert Welch ever intended for the B of I to be able to supersede the Executive Committee when and if the B of I decided unilaterally that such action was needed. The coup leaders can produce nothing in writing from Mr. Welch to support their contention. In fact, there is much evidence among the writings of Mr. Welch to the contrary (see, for example, Mr. Welch◊s comments re the Council in later editions of the *Blue Book*).

And Mr. Welch certainly didn't deliberately leave the Board of Incorporators in place for the purpose of acting as a check on the Executive Committee. The Board of Incorporators was part of the corporate structure created to satisfy the statutory requirements for incorporation in Massachusetts. Whereas many corporations are started by a board of incorporators that survives only briefly (a day or two) until control by stockholders can be established, this was not Mr. Welch's plan.

Mr. Welch made clear in subsequent editions of the *Blue Book* and in the *Bulletin* what his plan was. The Executive Committee, with the approval of the Council, was to select the leadership for the vitally important membership organization that Mr. Welch had founded and was building and which he hoped would last for hundreds of years. The caliber of men Mr. Welch recruited for the Council was truly impressive. In introducing the Council in a subsequent edition of the *Blue Book*, Mr. Welch wrote:

◆ And we believe that both the growth and the effectiveness of the Society will be greatly helped by the experience, ability, and resolute purpose of so strong a *governing body*. ◆ [Emphasis added.] After setting up the Council, Mr. Welch certainly did not intend to have the head of the membership department and his secretary choose the Society's leader.

If any other leaders in the Society recognized the ◆BOI◆ as so significant, why was it allowed in the late 1980s to shrink to just two members?

7. continued: ◆Mr. Smith knows that the BOI◆'s ultimate authority existed, and he had even pointed to it as the Society's ◆ace in the hole◆ should a need for change arise. Similarly, Tom Gow knew about the BOI◆'s power and even explained it most accurately in his June 15, 1990 letter to a member. He stated that the BOI possessed ◆ultimate legal authority◆ to control the organization. Further, both Mr. Smith and Mr. Gow know without question that it was Robert Welch's decision to have the BOI be the final authority. Which is why these two men resigned before the BOI took any action.◆

More self-serving distortions of the record! In further response to ◆Mr. John Fall◆'s memo about the BOI◆'s history,◆ please

see my August 23, 2006 letter analyzing Mr. John Fall♦'s claims.

And for the *real* reasons why we resigned, see our response to the next allegation (#8).

♦8. The financial condition of the Society at the beginning of 2005 was more than acceptable with \$887,000 in the bank. By September, this figure had shrunk to \$80,000. When Mr. Smith and Mr. Gow resigned on October 21, 2005, the total in the Society♦'s bank account was \$36,000 (not enough for meeting one payroll). It was the deficient Smith regime that had allowed the JBS coffers to be drastically depleted, not the regime that took control in October 2005.♦

Wow! Two years ago, I never would have imagined that my former colleagues would be capable of writing such deliberately distorted nonsense. In 1989, when the Society moved its headquarters to Appleton, there were no reserves. At one point in 1990, the IRS had the Society on a payment plan, because the Society had no money to pay the part of employee wages deducted (on paper) from each employee♦'s paycheck.

The Society was still living hand to mouth, when Mr. Smith conceived and led a successful campaign to persuade dedicated members to help purchase two headquarters buildings in Appleton. For many years, it was very unusual to have any reserves and we were constantly fighting to make payroll and pay our creditors in a timely manner. Welcome, new leaders, to the real world!

The unusual reserves in question were the result of contributions from the estates of thoughtful members, not the result of contemporaneous fundraising. Often, the member loyalty that led to such contributions had been developed decades earlier. All Mr. Smith and ♦his regime♦ could take credit for was that they put some of these unusual gifts aside to tide us over during slumps. Unfortunately, due to rising costs and an aging organization, more and more of the JBS operating income was dependent on estate gifts, which, as readers can understand, were of irregular frequency.

This was not a satisfactory budgetary situation. On top of that, fundraising for 2005 was, by the fall, several hundred thousands of dollars below the level for 2004. The person directly responsible for correcting that shortfall was Art Thompson, our supposed Director of National Development.

Vance and I were very concerned about the shortfall. We had been formulating plans for budget cuts. But before cutting staff, we were trying to address the problem by increasing revenue. In fact, we were both working to help Art's fundraising team by equipping them with an exciting case for a new round of contributions to an expanded FTAA campaign. Art was in Appleton precisely for that purpose on the day when Art confessed his role in the developing mutiny against Vance and the Executive Committee.

At that point, all new fundraising plans were put on hold by default, while we were forced to spend our time countering the letters and whispering campaigns of several previously trusted employees who were carrying out their campaign while still on our payroll. In effect, for several weeks we were paying them to undermine us and strangle our effectiveness to lead the organization. And they were attempting to maintain their jobs by alleging that Vance fired all who disagreed with him.

When that situation became untenable and we saw our ability to provide positive leadership at a standstill, we knew we could not maintain sufficient confidence in our leadership to stand up to an extended legal dispute with the Board of Incorporators. So rather than watch the Society stagnate under our reign and lose all support in the process, we decided to resign.

Leading up to the coup, the public attacks were directed primarily at Vance Smith. There was no criticism of a Smith regime. The coup leaders only wanted one villain. Of necessity, they had to criticize the Executive Committee as under Mr. Smith's thumb in order to pave the way for their Board of Incorporators' coup. But at that time their public criticism of Wayne, Walt, and Keith by name was restrained.

Nothing was directed at me, at the time, and there is little doubt

that I would have been permitted to stay, had I chosen to do so and had I been able to work with them. But I realized that working constructively for or with these men was no longer possible. Moreover, it would have been wrong (an affirmative validation that their campaign and what they had done was somehow okay). No one could reason with them. They were hell-bent on their course, and no one could protect these irresponsible fools from their own folly.

As I have observed many times since, they were acting like a bunch of kids who were angry with their parents for not allowing them to stay up and watch late-night TV. So they plotted to get rid of their parents. With that accomplished, they could now stay up as late as they pleased. But surprise ♦ there was no one to pay the electric bills, so none could watch *any* TV!

8. continued: ♦Mr. Smith and his team had no plan to address the Society♦s needs for the rest of 2005 and into the future ♦ other than to lay off a significant portion of the staff. This tragic situation had to be addressed by the Society♦s new and more responsible leadership.♦

[Emphasis added.]

What crass audacity! Such incredible poppycock! Art, our supposed Director of National Development, had been under pressure for months to meet his fundraising goals, and plans for both new revenue and cutbacks had been a focus of discussion for months. If Art and his fundraising team had been coming anywhere close to meeting their own modest goals for 2005, there would not have been this drain on resources. Even so, the situation was far more manageable than in years past.

(Since Art did not do well in fundraising under our leadership, it would be interesting to know how the new Executive Committee rates Art♦s fundraising performance now, as the Society♦s top fundraiser ♦ the CEO.)

Whoever wrote the assertion that ♦Mr. Smith and his team had no plan♦ to deal with the Society♦s financial situation ♦other than to lay off a significant portion of the staff♦ could qualify for a position with *Pravda*. As one example, Mr. Smith conceived the *Reclaiming America Seminars*, and carried the lion♦s share

of the workload for the project.

Eighteen of the seminars had been held, and more than a dozen more were scheduled when Vance's leadership was interrupted by the coup. A key objective of the afternoon seminar (patterned after the successful seminar program of years past) was to help the field staff (including the fundraising team) to help selected members develop the interest of their financially substantial friends.

And let's not forget the \$10 million capital campaign that Mr. Smith had conceived for RWU. \$2 million of that was earmarked for the Society! Mr. Smith had an outstanding track record of success with such plans and had the interest of significant donors who were key to getting such a campaign off the ground. Although that plan had to be put on hold when the Director of RWU resigned prematurely, it is pure malicious fantasy to suggest that the Smith team was content to play the violin while Rome burned.

In what way can the new leadership claim to be more responsible? In mid-2005, the Society was widely regarded to be in good hands. The new team destabilized that situation by trumping up a personnel crisis ostensibly requiring immediate action to replace the leader who had guided the Society successfully for 14 years. In the process, the staff lost several key leaders, several key donors were alienated, and the aged individuals who assumed the vacant titles could not even move to the Society's headquarters to fill the leadership vacuum the new team had created.

And once they were successful in stealing the leadership of the Society through leftist scare tactics, they could not even focus their attention on the enormous responsibility they had inherited. Incredibly, during his first day on the job as the Society's new president, Jack devoted his attention to gaining control of RWU!

Through Alan Scholl the new leadership at JBS continued to agitate the personnel at RWU, one of whom resigned immediately. Another had to be fired, whose subsequent actions even caused Art to write a disclaimer of responsibility. Despite their allegedly desperate financial situation, the new and more

responsible leadership♦ paid off their campaign debts to Alan Scholl and promised him a job even before he was fired at RWU. And they hired the RWU employee who had quit under Alan♦s influence.

But the worst was yet to come. Rather than acting as responsible professionals in the best long-term interests of both organizations, the new officers at JBS refused to cooperate at any level with the officers of RWU. Instead, they enlisted Alan Scholl, with one of Alan♦s attorney friends, in a plan to take control of RWU by force.

Putting that plan into operation, they organized a break-in at RWU headquarters, changed the locks, set up round-the-clock vigils with JBS employees equipped with sleeping bags, and represented themselves as the new leaders at RWU, while purporting to fire four of its employees. In the process, they also promoted Alan Scholl to VP of RWU.

Pushed to the wall again, this time our team fought back through the courts to defend against the actions of irresponsible individuals who had clearly violated the law. Although the JBS was not directly involved in the case, the violators abused their leadership positions at JBS again to use JBS resources to shield their personal liability. The resulting legal battle cost both organizations dearly in resources that could have been much better used in the freedom fight. This fight undoubtedly caused many JBS members to sit on the sidelines with their contributions.

When the Scholl team was ousted from RWU under court order, the ♦new and more responsible leadership♦ at JBS managed to invent a position for him, so that Alan could continue a war against RWU while on the JBS payroll.

It would require another long story to adequately describe the fruits of this new leadership at JBS during the past year. But, as a prime example, consider that the Coordinator staff has been decimated and the field volunteer organization is receiving virtually no leadership for growth. Meanwhile the staff in Appleton, under Alan Scholl♦s leadership, apparently rejoice that they can come to work in a permissive environment without

pressure. And they have the poor sense to tell the membership how motivated and determined they are now that the big, bad wolf is gone.

More responsible? Nonsense. Responsible individuals try to estimate the consequences of their acts ♦ before they act. There is no evidence that those who led the coup at JBS ever made the effort to do so.

♦9. Virtually the entire COUNCIL and the Executive Committee drawn from its members are heavily supportive of the change that occurred in October 2005. They do not want to restore to the post of CEO a man whose poor leadership was dragging the Society down, and they likewise see no reason why three Executive Committee members who resigned should be returned to the posts they abandoned through voluntary resignations. Since resigning, the three dissident Executive Committee members (Messrs. Rickert, Ruckel, and Van Buskirk) have conducted a disruptive campaign by issuing a series of letters full of misinformation to JBS members across the nation. To send their letters to JBS members, they even used without any authority the Society♦s proprietary mailing list.♦

We strongly suspect that the purported unanimity of Council support for each of the above-mentioned points is an exaggeration. We certainly know that Alan Scholl loves to orchestrate the appearance of unanimous support, as he did when he collected signatures of hourly employees for his infamous union ♦local 770♦ letter. And we know that two Council members, former JBS CEO G. Allen Bubolz and Brig. General Andrew J. Gatsis, U.S. Army (Ret.), vigorously objected to the McManus takeover. And another Council member, Brett Favero, resigned from the Council in protest. (On January 26, 2007, a little more than a year after the coup, General Gatsis also resigned from the Council.)

Some Council members undoubtedly have an investment in error, having sided with the coup leaders in 2005. Four ♦friendly members♦ have been appointed by the coup leaders since the coup. (Does this constitute ♦packing♦ the Council?).

And still others who perhaps believe that a mistake was made and that the Society is in trouble apparently don't feel qualified to intervene.

Even though many Council members almost worshiped Jack, because he is such a gifted speaker, they should know that Jack is not qualified to lead the Society nor is he even attempting to do so. And with what has been written and discussed, they all know why Jack stepped down as the Society's president at the end of 2003. They have been made fully aware of Jack's ego-driven statements at religious gatherings that were putting the Society's long-held positions in jeopardy.

So the members of the Council should also realize that the takeover in 2005 would not have occurred had not Jack decided to climb on board the coup train for personal reasons. He clearly was driven by ego, wanting to regain the prestige associated with his lost title. Sadly, Jack acted without regard for the broader interests of the Society and the freedom fight. We regret that more members of the Council have not been willing to stand up and work to correct the damage done.

We should add that, under Jack and Art's new and more responsible leadership, the Council is more dependent than ever for its information on what they are told by Jack and Art. Traditionally, Jack, based in Massachusetts, has been largely out of the loop. And, from our experience, Art has difficulty getting his facts straight, even when he tries.

Nevertheless, we saw some indication in a letter from Art a couple of months ago that the Executive Committee was not satisfied with the information they were getting and were insisting that at least one meeting a year be held in Appleton, where they could speak with others at the home office.

We can understand that Jack and Art would prefer that Messrs. Rickert, Ruckel and Van Buskirk not rock the boat while the Society fades into oblivion due to the damage Jack and Art have inflicted. But true leaders and patriots do not keep their mouths shut, while egos, misjudgment, and ambition sabotage the prime opportunity offered by the Society to change the course of history and preserve freedom.

Regarding the charge that the Rickert, Ruckel, Van Buskirk mailings are full of misinformation, we can only say that *without offering specifics*, it is a very easy charge to make and difficult to disprove. But in a contest over accuracy, there is no doubt in our minds which side in this dispute would lose.

Regarding the alleged use of proprietary mailing lists owned exclusively by the Society, it should be known that, until the split resulting from the JBS takeover, some lists were managed to the common benefit of several corporations and foundations in the JBS family, including RWU. In 2003, RWU began to develop its own lists when it launched operations at a new site with its own staff and computers.

But most importantly, Jack McManus knows, and if he doesn't Alan Scholl certainly knows, what we had in our possession as disclosed during discovery under oath and what as part of the July ♦*Stipulated Agreement and Release of Claims*♦ we were allowed to keep *and use* by mutual agreement sanctioned by the court.

♦10. The court ruling in mid-2006 awarding Mr. Smith and his team Robert Welch University resulted from their suit filed against several JBS officials. In their suit, they actually sought over \$700,000 in damages from JBS officials. After an initial ruling favoring the Smith-Gow takeover of Robert Welch University, a settlement was reached in the Wisconsin Court that voided numerous claims for damages but awarded them the University.

Talk about misleading by omission! The suit filed by Mr. Smith and his team was in response to *the illegal break-in, seizure, and occupation of RWU by force* by several misguided JBS employees at the behest of the ♦Society♦'s new and more responsible leadership.♦

The entire ♦*Twelve Points*♦ is simply riddled with errors and misleading statements. For example, the statement that ♦a settlement was reached in the Wisconsin Court that voided numerous claims for damages but awarded them the University♦ is incorrect and misleading. The settlement had

nothing to do with who controlled the University ♦ that had already been decided by the Court in our favor when we entered into negotiations over damages.

The damages we initially requested reflected not only what was incurred as a direct result of the break-in but also what it had cost the University to gain the final verdict from the court and the costs the defendants inflicted through their counterclaim.

Although the costs were very real and continuing, our request for damages did provide sufficient leverage to settle the later JBS legal suit (see below) outside of court and bring the expenses of this unfortunate legal battle to an end. All requests for damages were waived in the settlement.

Moreover, there was no ♦Smith-Gow takeover of Robert Welch University♦ in October of 2005. But this characterization is typical of the intentionally misleading statements that laced the dissidents♦ court filings, but were calculated more to play to members.

Mr. Smith and I had been officers of RWU for more than a decade. Alan Scholl likes people to think that he and the few who labored on behalf of RWU for three years in its new building to get the online program off the ground were the real leaders of RWU. Actually, Alan was not even assigned to that program ♦ he was supposed to be responsible for the youth camp program, which, under Alan♦s tutelage, greatly inhibited the early development and launch of the online degree program. Alan chooses to ignore the fact that only through the leadership of G. Vance Smith would there have even been an RWU building, an RWU staff, and funding for an RWU online program.

10. continued: "A later suit filed by the Society contested the placement of two JBS headquarters buildings in a restrictive covenant (a trust) controlled by Messrs. Rickert, Ruckel and Van Buskirk. This incredible on-the-way-out-the-door maneuver was accomplished by Mr. Smith 24 hours before he resigned as the Society♦s CEO. His appointment of the three trustees was similarly made 24 hours before each of them resigned from the Council and its Executive Committee. Knowing how thin their defense of this vengeance-laden maneuver was, the three trustees

eventually removed their names from the covenant and it is now controlled by loyal Society officials.?

A few months after their break-in at RWU, that same ♦new and more responsible leadership♦ initiated a suit on behalf of JBS, with ♦Mr. Smith and his team♦ as defendants. That hastily constructed suit was later revised to include more than 120 allegations replete with errors and alleging, in very general terms hard to disprove, all kinds of wrongdoing. In essence, the ♦new and more responsible leadership♦ was accusing us of anything and everything, hoping something might stand up under later discovery. This tactic would drive up RWU♦s legal expenses to respond to the nonsense.

Only a small portion of that lawsuit dealt with the restrictive covenant. The balance of the JBS lawsuit was dropped as part of the settlement negotiations over damages when ♦Mr. Smith and his team♦ won their lawsuit over control of RWU.

The restrictive covenant was put in place by the outgoing officers in October 2005 to prevent the ♦new and more responsible leadership♦ from squandering the building assets below the surface of public attention. It was feared that while the incoming officers grappled with their ineptitude, they might strive to create a false illusion of prosperity by consuming the equity in the buildings, even though the illusion of prosperity could not last.

If establishing the restrictive covenant was a ♦vengeance-laden maneuver♦ on our part, isn♦t it strange that it had the complete support of then JBS Director Gary Benoit, who now works for the ♦coup leaders?♦ (The coup leaders are very careful to avoid mentioning Mr. Benoit♦s support.)

And how was the purported vengeance to be extracted? On the front page of the February 2007 *JBS Bulletin*, members are assured that ♦the leaders and corporate structure of The John Birch Society have no intention of mortgaging the Society♦s headquarters buildings, now, or in the future.♦ Or perhaps we should ask, how about in the past, while the new leaders were making drastic cuts in the coordinator staff? And, if it were such a silly idea, why pursue a lawsuit to get it overturned, without

first even attempting to negotiate the matter with the Trustees involved?

It appears this remaining legal dispute has now been settled, when Messrs. Rickert, Ruckel, and Van Buskirk *voluntarily* relinquished their control of the covenant to the current Executive Committee. They explained their reasons for doing so in a widely circulated letter dated December 28, 2006.

Although the merits of the legal dispute are now moot, the *unreliability* of what the new JBS leaders are disseminating is not. Regardless of who the actual author of these polemics is, it is clear that he doesn't understand the legal issues and can't even state them correctly. For example, a restrictive covenant is not ♦(a trust).♦

Jack, in particular, never even understood the legal case they were involved in, anymore than he understood the proper role of the Board of Incorporators or what happened in 1993 with the change in bylaws. Jack is certainly smart enough to understand those things, but he simply doesn't care enough about such matters to get up to speed.

With regard to the claim that our defense for the ♦restrictive covenant♦ actions was thin, please note that the coup leaders have also predicted victory in court in the past and those predictions have been proven absurdly wrong.

♦11. Innovations and a changing atmosphere since October 2005 have stimulated a wave of enthusiasm throughout the Society.♦

This claim reminds me of the Communist spin on Castro♦s takeover in Cuba in 1959. I can recall one socialist speaker at UCLA claiming that the entire population of Cuba experienced what amounted to an instant spiritual revival. Ask the Coordinators who lost their jobs in 2005 how enthusiastic they are about the new innovations and changed atmosphere.

If there were truly a wave of enthusiasm *throughout* the Society would it not be evidenced in increased recruitment, new Chapters, and increasing magazine circulation? We suspect that

the ♦new and more responsible leadership♦ has forgotten that Mr. Welch♦s vision of The John Birch Society was a growing *body of members* in the field, not a group of satisfied employees in the home office enjoying a permissive atmosphere.

11. continued: ♦Returning to the past will harm the good that is being done and reward those whose leadership had become deficient and whose activity since October 2005 has accurately been characterized as ♦rule or ruin.♦?

Forgive me, but I think I am going to get sick.

Who decided our leadership had become deficient? Was it Jack, a Massachusetts-based news commentator, who dreamt up this explanation for why he had to step in to rescue the Society and regain his prized-title of President?

Let♦s not forget that Jack was JBS President ♦ ostensibly the number two man ♦ for 12 of the 14 years during the previous ♦deficient♦ leadership. During that time, he cultivated fans on the phone from his third floor attic room in Wakefield, Massachusetts. What♦s changed? Has he somehow learned to lead better from there than he did before?

Under Jack♦s subverted governing structure for the Society, who is presently authorized to determine that Jack♦s non-leadership is deficient and to replace *him*? Is Jack not, in reality, only answerable to the Board of Incorporators, which he controls?

Who is it that has ♦accurately♦ characterized our activity since 2005 as ♦rule or ruin♦? Perhaps, the coup leaders? This charge seems to fit the mold of what Mr. Welch called the principle of reversal ♦ accuse your enemy of what you yourselves are guilty of, a lie so monstrous that none will dare to risk their credibility in challenging it. Not only are the new ♦leaders♦ at JBS ruining the Society with their rule, but for almost a year they pursued the ♦rule or ruin♦ tactic against RWU.

For many months following their takeover at JBS, we kept the gloves on and were very restrained in our response to inquiries

about the change in leadership. And when we did respond, it was largely to react to the stories that JBS staff were expected to carry to our mutual donors to the effect that we were the cause of the problems the new leadership was having at JBS. We never counseled others to withdraw their financial support from JBS or drop their membership or volunteer positions. We eventually did counsel others to ask tough questions of JBS leadership and insist that the damage to Mr. Welch's structure be repaired.

During *that* period the ♦new and more responsible leadership♦ at JBS kept Alan Scholl on the JBS payroll with the principle assignment of fighting the RWU court case, even though the JBS was not a defendant. While it should have been clear they had no legal defense for their actions at RWU, the coup leaders did all they could through court motions to drive up legal costs and prevent RWU from spending any money to function while the case was being decided. In the meantime, they tried to poison the well for RWU donations and drive away potential students, all the while complaining to the world that we weren't able to generate students and that RWU enrollment was falling under our leadership. Some might even ♦accurately♦ characterize their actions as diabolic!

♦12. During his years as CEO, Vance Smith frequently told colleagues that should his leadership ever be found deficient, he would quietly step aside with gratitude for having been given the honor to serve and promptly turn the reins of leadership over to someone else.♦

We first read this silly misrepresentation in a self-serving, open letter Jack addressed to Vance, suggesting that Vance step down. The statement is silly because it fails to provide any qualifications at all for who can make the finding to which Vance allegedly promised to accede (Jack loves to write in the passive voice). Is the finding of an angry member sufficient? Or perhaps the conclusion of one or two members of the Council? How about a couple of disgruntled employees who got together over dinner with Jack McManus?

Certainly, it♦s absurd to imagine that the CEO should abdicate in the face of just any opposition. No CEO could survive a day

with that test. Let's not forget the reason why Mr. Welch insisted that the Society *must* have a monolithic structure. He explained why a parliamentary organization would be a disaster in opposing the Conspiracy, and he made clear he wasn't launching another debating club.

The only body that could properly determine that the CEO should step down was the Executive Committee. I don't think there is any question that Mr. Smith would have quietly stepped down had the Executive Committee so decided. But the Executive Committee never had the opportunity to hold a hearing on the charges being leveled, because of the irresponsible intervention by Jack's Board of Incorporators, supported by the cry of the mob.

And that is what Mr. Smith's defenders were facing ♦ the demands of a mob seeking mob justice. No one committed to republican principles could accept the selection of a leader through such procedures. Even if Mr. Smith had wanted to retire in the face of such suddenly hostile opposition, he couldn't have done so in good conscience. We recognized that it would have been unforgivable to capitulate to such demands while there was any practical opportunity to resist. The precedent would have been, and now is, catastrophic for the Society.

12. continued: ♦But in October 2005, he did the exact opposite of what he had pledged and he and his small group of allies have caused a great amount of stress within the Society ever since their resignations. They claim to be acting for the best interests of The John Birch Society but the reality is that their ♦rule or ruin♦ campaign has unfavorably impacted the efforts of those who are the organization's legitimate leaders.♦

Apparently, what we have here is an agreement to disagree ♦ or, more accurately, an inversion of the truth in writing history. In the months leading up to October 2005, the small group of coup leaders orchestrated a whispering campaign to undermine support for Mr. Smith with members of the Council. By late October, they had succeeded in paralyzing any positive leadership coming out of the home office.

When Mr. Smith and the Executive Committee did not immediately give in to their pressure tactics, the coup leaders announced their plan to use the Board of Incorporators to subvert the long-established succession procedures and neuter the well established authority of the Executive Committee and Council. Their power coup caused the resignation of several members of the Council who had given generously of their time and contributed millions in support to the Society. The ill-considered actions of these coup leaders also cost the Society the support of several key staff members.

Then they filled the Society’s top spots with non-leaders who refused to relocate to Appleton, instead turning over control of operations to Alan Scholl and newcomer Chris Bentley. The bureaucrats in Appleton measure their success, not by growth in activity, Chapters, and members in the field, a concern only recently discovered for the purposes of their “Twelve Points,” but by how united, motivated, and satisfied their fellow employees are in a complacent atmosphere without leadership.

When our team was forced out at JBS and relocated our offices reluctantly to RWU, we had decided not to bad mouth the new leaders publicly, but to let them succeed or fail on their own merits. We were also prepared to cooperate with our former colleagues and adversaries at JBS for the best long-term interests of both organizations. We even helped JBS staff take back the summer camp program, which we could not afford to continue on our own. And we were prepared to continue a revised fundraising agreement that would benefit both organizations. But our professional good will was rejected.

After the coup leaders captured control of the one organization with any potential to expose the Conspiracy and save our Republic, they immediately turned their attention not to the growth of the Society so it could accomplish its mission, but to control of fledgling Robert Welch University whose online program was only weeks old.

Under the best projections, RWU would have required years before it was a significant factor in the freedom fight. Yet a few weeks later, the new leaders at JBS sanctioned an illegal break-in at RWU headquarters, which led to an expensive and

disruptive court battle.

Filled with the hatred they had worked themselves up into, they could not resist asking their field staff to vilify Mr. Smith to our common donors and distort the record of what had transpired. In the months following their takeover at JBS, their agendas for the Society have been well established. No doubt those presently in control at JBS would prefer to rule *and* ruin without any efforts by us to enlighten members as to what transpired. But there is too much at stake for responsible individuals to fade quietly into the sunset without having at least spoken up to set the record straight.

We have also tried unsuccessfully to awaken the consciences and sense of responsibility by many on the Council. There is and has been since October 21, 2005 plenty of opportunity for any serious leaders of the Society to offer leadership and gain support. But the current ♦leaders♦ cannot succeed because they have no intention of trying and the truth is not in them. With the change in leadership, the Society also underwent a weapons change: Tragically, Mr. Welch♦'s principled motto ♦Truth is our only weapon♦ has been replaced with ♦Trash talk is our only weapon!♦

The ♦legitimate leaders♦ ♦their term ♦ at JBS would never have needed to worry about us rocking their boat if they were willing to return the Society to the path mapped out by Robert Welch. Clearly, they have no intention of doing so. Tragically, their intransigence will destroy The John Birch Society as an effective force in the freedom fight.

So, reluctantly, but firmly, we have announced our own plans and separate course for the future. We believe that all of us now need to be devoting our energies to thwarting the enemies of freedom.

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Tom Gow Memo Regarding JBS Building Restrictive Covenant...

December 20, 2005

To: Whom It May Concern

From: Tom Gow

Subject: Status of JBS Buildings

Since G. Vance Smith and I resigned as officers and directors of JBS on October 21, 2005, several rumors have circulated regarding the status of the two adjacent buildings owned by The John Birch Society. Examples: "The outgoing team led by G. Vance Smith stole the buildings." "The John Birch Society no longer owns its buildings."

As so often with repeated hearsay, the rumors bear little resemblance to reality.

A day or two prior to our resignation, the JBS Board of Directors met and unanimously authorized the issuance of a Declaration of Restrictive Covenant on the two buildings. JBS Director Gary Benoit, who now works for the new team, supported this action.

The Covenant was designed to protect the contribution of the donors who helped purchase the buildings. The key provision of the Covenant is that JBS "shall not pledge, assign, mortgage or sell the Property" for a period of ten years without the consent of the Trustees of a newly created Trust ("The John Birch Society Endowment Trust").

The Trustees are three of the major donors who enabled JBS to purchase the property: Keith L. Van Buskirk, Wayne C. Rickert, and C. Walter Ruckel. Neither G. Vance Smith nor Tom Gow are Trustees nor do they have any control over or financial interest in the Trust. *The JBS still owns its buildings* and with the consent of the Trustees can mortgage or sell these assets when and if JBS truly needs to.

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Why did the Board of Directors place such a restriction on the property? Because the Directors were greatly concerned that the new team, which had not been officially selected, would seek to conceal its ineptness for many months by mortgaging and squandering this asset to meet operating needs.

The JBS buildings had been purchased with great generosity by many donors interested in securing the future success of JBS. There was an implied covenant with the donors that the buildings would not be mortgaged except in extreme emergency and not to meet the ups and downs of operating income. G. Vance Smith had made that pledge many times to the Council. Since the first of the two buildings was purchased in 1995, neither of the buildings had been encumbered in any way.

Why did the Board of Directors feel that it was prudent to formalize this covenant in October of 2005? Because the outgoing team understood the limitations and proclivities of the likely replacements. They saw the campaign to change the leadership as being waged under false pretenses ♦u it was not just about getting rid of Vance Smith, but about changing the *structure* of control. And they saw a danger in the irresponsible tactics being used to bring about this change (such as agitation and trial thru accusation, often by anonymous accusers, and the lack of openness about what the accusers were unleashing ♦u in particular, how a successor would be chosen and the qualifications of those being considered).

That the replacement team has made a frequent issue of the Covenant strongly suggests that the fears of the former Board of Directors were well-founded.

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Tom Gow responds to report in August JBS Bulletin

In contrast to the measured [commentary on the settlement](#) of the RWU court case posted on our website, the JBS in its August *Bulletin* missed the accuracy mark by a mile. RWU♦'s VP Tom Gow responds below.

August 3, 2006

Fact or Fiction in August *JBS Bulletin*?

♦**Truth is our only weapon**♦ **Robert Welch**

Our Only Weapon

Mr. Welch was supremely dedicated to the truth. In fact, he believed that ♦simple truth is the very core of morality♦ and that ♦when we persuade enough people to make truth the prerequisite to all statements and the accepted guide to all actions, at least half of the world♦ problems would rapidly disappear.♦ (April 1966 *Bulletin*) Because of that commitment to the truth, JBS members in the Society♦'s early years learned that they could go to the bank with what was printed in their monthly *Bulletin*, and, as a result, they developed great confidence in their leader.

Subsequent leaders and publication writers and editors followed in Mr. Welch♦'s footsteps. They too recognized how important it was to uphold a high standard of truth and accuracy if the Society were to attract and maintain a devoted following, willing and able to tackle the pervasive lies of the Establishment.

So it is particularly disheartening to see that standard trashed by short-

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sighted JBS leaders who are clearly using the printed word to deceive. As our example, we take the article in the August *Bulletin* entitled ♦JBS Loses, then ♦Wins,♦ Court Case That Threatened Its Future.♦

This short, front-page article attempts to put a positive spin on a legal defeat. However, it is filled with so many false and misleading statements that few readers would be willing to read the many pages needed to refute them all. So we have elected to comment here on only a few of the claims (in red):

♦The case was based on a claim that Smith and his management team were the rightful owners of Robert Welch University (RWU).... On Wednesday, July 12, the Outagamie County district court judge who heard the Smith group♦s case ... ruled against JBS on a motion requesting final judgment in the matter, a decision that meant Smith and his group would own RWU outright, and that JBS officials might be liable for damages after a jury trial scheduled for Monday, July 17. But the trial was never held.♦ ♦ August Bulletin

Correction Please! No wonder Art and Jack lost the case. They never even understood it. The case was to decide the relatively simple question of which individuals and boards controlled, **not owned**, RWU and determine the damages caused by the defendants in attempting to seize RWU by force based on a contested board meeting. No one owns a 501(c)(3), nor does anyone own JBS. But elected boards and officers properly control each.

Moreover, Judge Dennis Luebke never ♦ruled against JBS on a motion....♦ JBS was never even a party to the case!

For public relations purposes, the defendants in the RWU case have attempted to portray the lawsuit as an outrageous attack on JBS led by former JBS CEO G. Vance Smith: ♦**JBS can now move forward without a black cloud hanging over its collective head.**♦

Apparently, the individual defendants didn♦t want to be personally liable for their actions and so have sought to make it appear that they were acting on behalf of JBS, even though they never dared to state as much in court.

♦♦This has been a terrible burden on our own management and staff over the past eight months,♦ said McManus. ♦Everyone has been worried about the future....♦?

As quoted above, the August lawsuit article further misleadingly omits the fact that the new leaders at JBS, who carelessly conceived the action to seize RWU by force, precipitated the entire mess themselves. A few individuals, acting ostensibly on behalf of RWU, not JBS, following a contested board meeting, broke into the RWU building, changed the locks, occupied the building with round-the-clock vigils equipped with

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sleeping bags, and purported to fire Vance and three members of his staff.

The above statement♦'s inversion of the truth is like blaming a victim of car theft for starting a fight by calling the police to recover stolen property. In deciding in favor of plaintiffs♦ motion for summary judgment the court ruled, in part:

♦Therefore, under either of the only viable conclusions to be reached in this case, defendants are unable to validate, under the governing rules of RWU, their right or entitlement to do as they did in their efforts to wrest control of RWU from the plaintiffs, or to otherwise justify their efforts on equitable grounds. As such, plaintiffs♦ motion for summary judgment as to liability issues is granted, subject to trial on damages, if any, they may be entitled to.♦

That♦'s another reason why the Defendants lost the case. They didn♦t have one. Instead they plied the court with constantly shifting and often irrelevant legal theories invented after they got their hands caught in the cookie jar. And in proclaiming their theories and accusations in court, which they echoed to JBS and RWU donors, they cost RWU hundreds of thousands of dollars to respond. At the same time, they had the audacity to complain to the world that RWU was not engaged in expensive marketing to bring in new students.

The front-page article in the August *Bulletin* also fails to point out that the JBS was party to a *different* lawsuit, however. This was a lawsuit *instigated* by JBS at the behest of several of the defendants in the RWU lawsuit. This lawsuit was filed against G. Vance Smith, Thomas G. Gow, RWU et al.

♦**But contrary to long-established precedent, and though the two men [Vance and Tom] resigned, they continued to try to assert control over JBS-affiliated assets, including claiming control of Robert Welch University. When previous JBS leaders were appointed, it was assumed by all concerned that the CEO appointment included appointment to all JBS-affiliated corporations, including John Birch University.**♦

I am appalled at the ignorance of my former colleagues about matters of corporate governance. They are suggesting that the boards for the various corporations are mere fictions. And that when some JBS board (which one?) appoints a CEO, that JBS board♦'s decision should be binding on the boards for the other corporations. In the early 1990s, that thinking threatened to make the Society very vulnerable to another ♦Gertz vs. Robert Welch Inc♦ case or other hostile lawsuit directed at a member of the JBS family of corporations. In order to have the protection of independent corporations, corporate formalities must be followed. During the reforms of 1993, more defensible guidelines were implemented to keep the corporations together.

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The problem is not that Jack and Art didn't and don't understand these guidelines, but that they didn't think it sufficiently important to find out if there were dangerous minefields and traps about which they were unaware ♦ before they tried to speak with authority. But from the beginning that was their attitude toward replacing Vance Smith and taking authority away from the Executive Committee ♦ ♦ No problem. It can't be that difficult to fly this plane. We can even do it remotely ♦ from Boston, Dallas, and Spokane.♦

♦**The moral position on this court case can best be presented by asking a simple question: ♦ Does Robert Welch University belong to G. Vance Smith and his small group or does it belong to The John Birch Society?♦♦**

Jack loves to point out missing alternatives, but he missed this one: Why doesn't Jack admit they made a mistake and cooperate with Vance and Tom in the best interests of both organizations? In addition, if Jack would reconstitute the Executive Committee as it was prior to October 2005, then the Executive Committee would exercise controlling influence over both organizations.

Even their so-called moral position was developed after the defendants♦ illegal acts had failed to get them what they wanted. But what's worse, their so-called moral position totally inverts the truth about who was responsible for the separation.

Certainly, the people who invested in and labored to build the Society and RWU did so with the hope that both would remain in Birch hands. Jack and Art apparently never paid attention to the steps taken to ensure that RWU would remain securely in Birch hands. The plan was never that the two organizations would have the same CEO forever. Particularly as RWU grew it would deserve to have its own officers. Nevertheless, everyone wanted to ensure a mutually supporting relationship ♦ one that would also keep RWU on track.

This tie was intended to be implemented at the board level. G. Vance Smith, Tom Gow, Wayne Rickert, and Walt Ruckel did not steal RWU from JBS. Jack♦s Board of JBS Incorporators ♦stole♦ JBS from the control of the JBS Executive Committee, through which interlocking boards controlled both JBS and RWU.

Yet even with that break at the board level, there was no obvious reason that Birchers in charge of both organizations could not act professionally and work together in the long-term interests of both organizations. Although the relationship would have been strained, Vance and I were fully prepared to work with JBS in areas of fundraising and student recruitment. After all, both organizations were intended to have a future far beyond the careers of the leaders at either JBS or RWU.

However, there are not so obvious reasons why the leaders at JBS would not work with RWU and would insist on a separation, while

blaming the separation on Vance Smith. Yes, *they* insisted on separation.

♦JBS founder Robert Welch originally created the university to supply future leaders to the organization.♦

Where♦s the documentation for that paraphrase of Mr. Welch♦s intent? It sounds to us like someone is substituting his imagination for research. In recent years, the potential of the University to generate high-quality candidates for JBS positions (both volunteer and staff) has been favorably mentioned as a wonderful by-product. But that was never Mr. Welch♦s reason for starting a university.

Mr. Welch♦s desire to create a true liberal arts university stemmed not from a concern over a shortage of potential JBS leaders, but from the disastrous state of higher education in America. He was very familiar with that dismal condition, having studied at Harvard and having served as chairman of the Education Committee of the National Association of Manufacturers.

♦JBS sent a selection of the organization♦s top personnel to create Robert Welch University;♦

Correction Please! Even this simple statement is calculated to mislead. It was not the impersonal JBS, but the personal dynamic leadership of G. Vance Smith that provided a staff for RWU. After selling his proposal for RWU to the JBS Executive Committee, in 2002 Mr. Smith took steps to have JBS purchase the adjoining headquarters building so that JBS would have more space and so that RWU could purchase an unoccupied headquarters building, where its new staff could focus on university matters.

Vance also selected the initial full-time staff for the new facility. Two, exactly two, full-time employees at JBS (Ph.D.-candidate Steven Bonta and Research Assistant David Spilker) were recruited and transferred to the new RWU payroll. Their mission: To design and implement the University♦s program and business plan. Alan Scholl initially went to RWU in order to run the youth camps, not to get involved with the adult program at the University. But that♦s another story. RWU then hired several new, non-Birch staff and a former JBS accountant (part time). However, RWU continued to receive direction from Vance and support from Tom Gow, Paul Smith, and a few others on the JBS payroll.

♦As JBS CEO Art Thompson observed, ♦In the struggle for ownership and control of RWU, it is the university that was harmed by Smith♦s actions; regardless, we know the JBS mission will prevail. [At RWU? at JBS? or in America?] This unwanted fight has made our staff even closer♦♦

♦This unwanted fight? Again, the would-be car thieves are inverting the truth as to who started the fight and are trying to portray JBS as a

defendant. Although Vance and I were angry over the tactics used to push us out at JBS, we nevertheless understood our responsibility as professionals to cooperate with JBS in the best interests of both organizations. When we relocated our offices to RWU, we were determined to support the member investment in RWU and demonstrate by success at RWU that the charges of Smith♦'s mismanagement while at JBS were unfounded.

Recognizing that these would-be leaders were ill-prepared to lead (and, as we later discovered, not even really inclined to do so), we fully expected that JBS would soon get itself in trouble. Accordingly, we had another motivation for wanting to keep our team together in Appleton ♦ we wanted to be able to help with the JBS rescue operation if our help was requested by responsible authority.

In the meantime, we expected to maintain a professional relationship with the JBS leaders. My early (November 4th) letter to JBS regarding return of the youth camp program was evidence of the expected spirit of cooperation: ♦ If you decide to resume your sponsorship of the [camp] program, please let us know what files or assistance are needed to allow for a smooth transition.♦ That spirit was not returned.

We fully expect to have more to say in the future about the freedom fight and its leadership.

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Tom Gow Tackles Incorporator Claims...

Wednesday, August 23, 2006

Rusty Barlow
Pocatello, Idaho

Dear Rusty,

You asked me to review your letter to Chick Heileson responding to John Fall♦'s latest attempt to justify the intervention of the JBS Board of Incorporators. For the record, we are referring to John Fall♦'s July 11th ♦To Whom It May Concern♦ letter.

Actually, I think you have responded to Chick very well. However, there are a couple of points I would like to make, from my perspective, regarding the Fall letter.

I don♦t think our focus here should be on whether the JBS Board of Incorporators (B of I) had the ♦legal♦ authority to do what it did. Instead, I believe we should focus on whether the B of I was justified, based on long-standing commitments and the wishes of Mr. Welch, in intervening as it did. That intervention was clearly a gross betrayal of the understandings that had guided the Society♦'s leadership for decades, and, in my opinion, stemmed from ♦selfish motives♦ while empowering ♦ineptitude.♦ * More on that later.

John quotes from an open letter from me dated June 15, 2000 in which I appear to state a legal conclusion. I don♦t recall the context which prompted that letter, but the statement reflects my understanding at the time. In light of what has transpired and what I have learned since, I probably would not be so emphatic that the B of I has absolute legal authority to do what it did. I believe attorneys could find a basis for challenging that action.

But rather than arguing whether there were any other legal restrictions on the power given to the B of I as expressed in the by-laws, we should look to the understandings that had guided the Society for decades, particularly as those understandings were modified in 1993, in joint

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meetings between our corporate attorney, the B of I, and the Executive Committee.

In 1993, following several years of unfortunate corporate confusion, the two bodies explicitly recognized the existence of each other. An arrangement was worked out in which the Executive Committee would continue to do as Mr. Welch intended ♦ in effect, select the leadership of the Society. It was recognized by all parties that the Executive Committee was best suited for that task, as these dedicated business and professional Birchers were in regular discussion with JBS leaders regarding the management of the Society, its progress, and its plans.

It was also recognized that members of the Board of Incorporators were often not privy to such discussions and were not universally selected for their management or leadership experience. In particular, members of the B of I often lacked the information or the perspective to judge personalities, either those currently serving in leadership positions or prospective candidates.

There was some talk in subsequent years among a few of the Incorporators, along the lines referred to by John Fall, that the B of I could step in as a last resort if the Society were ever pulled off the track Mr. Welch envisioned for it (such as a takeover by someone who wanted to convert the Society into a watered-down new-right organization).

In effect, some members of the B of I came to look upon themselves as carrying more than just perfunctory corporate responsibilities. In addition, they viewed themselves as the guardians of the faith against say the possibility that a wealthy businessman, with shallow Birch commitment or a different agenda, might some day gain influence over the Society and attempt to transform it (in our history, there have been justifiable concerns regarding a couple of Council members). Such a check was redundant, however, since at least in recent decades the leaders on staff and the members of the Executive Committee have themselves been on guard against such a development. Better to prevent theft than to hope to recover stolen property undamaged.

During the 1990s, several of the Incorporators who contemplated such a future development were reminded that any such fanciful intervention should only be contemplated as a last-ditch rescue effort. It was further pointed out that any intervention undertaken lightly would undoubtedly alienate the support of those who served on the Executive Committee.

Most significantly, it was never contemplated that the Board of Incorporators would come out of the shadows and conduct regular oversight of how the organization was being managed or seize control because of the grievances of a few disgruntled employees. But in 2005, the B of I chose to overlook one of its fundamental trusts and responsibilities ♦ to ensure that its own Board members did not run amok.

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What happened in October of last year far exceeded any role I ever heard expressed for the Incorporators. In reality what happened was a raw grab for power by Jack McManus, engineered under cover of a crisis (analogous to the well-known, often-used tactic of the Insiders for usurping power).

The crisis creating the urgency for Vance♦s removal was trumped up, and no member of the B of I, Jack McManus included, was sufficiently informed to judge that the Executive Committee was not doing its job, as some of the mutineers alleged. Most importantly, the B of I had no alternative solution but to empower ♦ineptitude.♦ * True to the previously mentioned nature of the B of I, the members voting as the majority didn♦t even realize that the men they would cause to be put in place were incapable of running the organization successfully nor did this majority appear to recognize any serious downside to what they were doing.

In his letter, John Fall offered this self-serving praise for Jack: ♦... Jack, through his extensive travels and appearances throughout the country, to my mind, exhibited more than anyone else that dynamic personal leadership Mr. Welch has said was so important.♦ Jack has certainly been popular and has sought and cultivated many fans (for himself personally), and John appears to be one of them. But John Fall shouldn♦t confuse the size of Jack♦s fan group with personal dynamic leadership. Even if Jack had a track record of making leadership decisions, which he does not, and even if he were inclined to make such decisions, how could he give the Society the leadership it needed while based in Wakefield, Massachusetts?

Again, this is why members of the Executive Committee ♦ men concerned with bottom lines ♦ were tasked with selecting a leader. The men on the Executive Committee were also well aware of the strengths and weaknesses of candidates for leadership. They knew that Jack♦s distorted ego often led him to put the Society at risk. In fact, in 1991, several members of the Executive Committee confronted Jack over his ego problem and challenged him to keep his ego under control before they would agree to appoint him President.

John Fall shouldn♦t portray himself as a faithful guardian independent of Jack♦s influence. Let♦s not forget that 16 members of the Council (more than a two-thirds majority) responded favorably to a letter from Wayne Rickert asking for their support in insisting that the B of I hold off any action (for eight days) until after the Orlando Council meeting. These 16 men wanted the B of I to allow the Executive Committee and the Council to have an opportunity to deal with the problem. They felt strongly about the importance of respecting the Executive Committee♦s authority, even though some of those so responding had shortly before signed a petition calling for Vance♦s resignation. The wishes of these 16 were forwarded to the B of I, but John Fall refused to give this process a chance. In fact, he supplied the pivotal vote that created the current crisis destroying The John Birch Society. Why?

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Perhaps G. Allen Bubolz provides a clue. Allen was outraged when he read John Fall♦'s letter, wherein John postured himself as the great protector of the faith. Allen recalls that after Allen was named CEO and President that Jack McManus came to him and boasted that if Allen ever needed to take advantage of the Board of Incorporators that all he needed to do was ask. Jack explained that he had the power to control the B of I, because John Fall (and apparently at least one other incorporator) would always follow his lead. Jack stressed that the B of I had the power to overturn anything done by other JBS boards or committees.

Those who had a close working relationship with Jack could easily recognize why Jack climbed on board the coup train ♦ he saw it as an opportunity to regain some lost prestige. As an illustration of Jack♦'s mindset consider Jack♦'s testimony during a November 29th hearing (the RWU case) in Outagamie County court. Jack claimed that in 2004 during a two-and-a-half hour car ride, Vance Smith♦'s son Gregg complained to him about his father♦'s mismanagement. Those who knew Jack had to chuckle when Jack elaborated with this sole example of Gregg♦'s alleged unhappiness with his Dad: ♦Jack, why aren♦t they using you? Why aren♦t you down on Washington and C-Span doing this [speaking against the FTAA]?♦ As if Jack not getting the spotlight was the most indicting accusation against Vance♦'s leadership!

Those instigating the coup well understood Jack♦'s egotistical proclivities. For that reason, a few of them would likely have preferred to dump Jack along with Vance, but Jack held the ♦Ace in the Hole♦ they needed to seize control.

It still appears to me that Art Thompson was the prime instigator of this coup. An outspoken critic of Jack, Art was the one who influenced Larry Waters, the other member of the B of I voting for intervention, to oppose Vance. Jack (John) McManus was a Johnny-come-lately who climbed on board when the opportunity was handed to him. I still feel betrayed by Art. In 2005, I shared an office next to his, and I had heard his complaints ♦ I agreed with some, but disagreed with most. Yet I had no idea that Art had decided to work behind the scenes to turn the organization on its head.

I attribute Art♦'s success in pulling Larry Waters into rebellion, along with another of my former colleagues who worked in the field, to unfortunate judgment on their part supported by their remoteness from the day-to-day decision making.

So my characterization of the B of I action comes down to this: It was a betrayal of responsibility, motivated by selfishness, supported by spinelessness and short-sightedness, resulting in the empowerment of ineptitude. *

I hope these thoughts help create some clarity.

Sincerely,

Tom Gow

* John Fall writes: ♦[Mr. Welch] did not intend for the Board [of Incorporators] to play an ongoing, active, leadership role but for it to exist quietly in the background, delegating most of its authority, but with potential power to be a final protection against extraordinary circumstances and the possibility that the more visible leadership might someday, *through ineptitude, selfish motives, or treachery*, threaten damage to the Society, place its well-being in jeopardy or steer it away from the course or principles that he intended.♦ Emphasis added.

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Paradigm UnShift Needed

by Tom Gow

◆ This [Determination] packet represents a *paradigm shift* in marketing the John Birch Society to whole new groups of potential members. ◆ ◆ Arthur Thompson, JBS CEO [emphasis added]

A nice-looking centerspread under the title ◆ Determined to Win◆ in the November 13, 2006 issue of *The New American* introduces readers to a new JBS packet. Readers are told that this *Determination Packet* is ◆ a presentation tool that shines a viewer friendly light on the John Birch Society.◆

Unfortunately, readers are left in the dark as to why they are being treated to such an announcement. Are they supposed to order something? (No order information is given.) Or do the current JBS leaders imagine this information will merely persuade readers to think better of JBS?

Since everyone blunders from time to time, pointing out such deficiencies may seem like nitpicking. That◆s not our intent. Instead, we draw attention to the centerspread and packet because they highlight much more serious leadership problems that threaten the Society◆s vital mission. For starters, both items provide evidence of a significant vision problem at JBS.

A real paradigm shift at JBS *has* occurred. The poor member in the field seems to have been forgotten. The functionaries running the office have become overly impressed with their own importance and appear to have forgotten who is truly important at JBS ◆ the active member in the trenches.

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Throughout the previous history of JBS, members were recruited into the Society so that they could work more effectively in the cause of freedom. They knew (or at least were constantly told) that if change for the better was to occur it would be through their efforts, not as the result of some marketing activity, publishing activity, or lobbying activity by home office personnel. The home office operation was for leadership and support.

But now we are told that the JBS is going to win because the home office team has signed a ♦Declaration of Determination♦ and enjoys ♦a revved-up spirit of teamwork♦ ♦ even as the supporting field staff is being steadily phased out.

During the winter of 1944-45, many U.S. troops on the German lines in the Ardennes were suffering from inadequate or insufficient winter clothing and equipment. Imagine how they would have felt had they received the following letter from Army headquarters in DC:

♦Just wanted to let you know, here at headquarters we are determined to win and have never enjoyed a greater spirit of teamwork. *Our new team is in the process of 'Turbo-Charging' the [Army♦s] engine.* Of course, we understand that the tanks (more accurately firetraps) we sent you are no match for the German panzers. But, *for starters, we♦ve developed new Internal and External Operational Systems to increase speed and efficiency.*♦ [Italics drawn from the JBS *Determination Packet.*]

The seizure of power at JBS by functionaries with this bureaucratic mentality was noticed early on by Don Fotheringham, who wrote about it in [his response](#) to what he called the ♦Local Union 770♦ [January 31, 2006] letter.

Who♦s Really in Charge in Appleton?

In the aforementioned centerspread, (non) JBS Marketing Manager George Katalik boasts, ♦The packet represents the first of many initiatives ultimately aimed to ♦turbo-charge♦ the cause of preserving constitutionally protected freedoms.♦

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We should hope that the next in this series of promised initiatives is better thought out than the self-aggrandizing *Determination Packet*. And more focused on how the members can use the supplied tools to build an effective organization.

A couple of weeks prior to the appearance of the centerspread, members of JBS received the *Determination Packet* as part of a fall appeal mailing. Although the appeal mailing similarly extolled the packet, nowhere did the mailing suggest to members how they might use the enclosed ♦tools.♦

Perhaps two of the more useful-looking items were the short bios of Robert Welch and John Birch. They looked like they might make good envelope stuffers to mail to prospects. Unfortunately, they were slightly oversized and wouldn♦t fit in a standard envelope. Also they provided no follow-up contact information ♦ no physical address nor even a web address. And no price information if one wanted to order more. What can you undertake with one of each? [Let♦s hope our constitutionally threatened Republic will survive until the keys to these ♦turbo-charged♦ weapons are provided.]

But perhaps the saddest part were the errors in these ♦tools♦ that would be obvious to any veteran JBS member: ♦Robert Welch ... pushed the Society to prominence in the 1950s.♦ ♦During WWII, John [Birch] put his life on the line and rescued several prisoners....♦

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Wayne Rickert Expose Art Thompson...

March 17, 2006

To: Art Thompson, JBS Building Contributors, Council and Fieldstaff

This letter is in response to Art Thompson's letter dated March 10, 2006, and, as indicated, I am addressing it to Art and the rest of you individually and separately.

This letter is about pointing out lies, and it's about telling the truth. For 40 years I've been told that truth is our only weapon. Well, let's see.

Art, your letter is full of lies, including the following:

Lie #1: ♦ The real issue is whether the three men who resigned from the Council, two of whom are currently suing the JBS, should be allowed to control the JBS buildings instead of the JBS.♦

Correction Please! Art Thompson repeatedly states that we, or others, are suing the JBS. No one is suing the JBS. The lawsuit by RWU over the control of RWU is not against the JBS, but against several individuals, who engaged in illegal actions. There was no involvement of JBS in these actions. And JBS members and donors should not countenance the use of JBS funds to defend these men in any lawsuit. The Council should demand to look at the JBS books to make sure this is not happening.

Lie #2: ♦ How can they maintain that they are only working in the best interest of the JBS, while they are actively trying to win a large financial judgment against it...? ♦ Many rumors are flying around about lawsuits, one of which is that the current leadership of the JBS initially sued the previous leadership and RWU. This is not true.♦

Correction Please! If there are any rumors being spread about lawsuits, they are being spread by you, Art, and unwittingly (probably) by your staff.

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Fact: In order to regain rightful control of RWU, we, the Plaintiffs, have initiated a lawsuit against Defendants Art Thompson, Jack McManus, and a few other individuals directly involved in seizing our building and attempting to control our bank accounts and fire several of our employees. We would have no reason to allege otherwise. Why would the Defendants initiate a lawsuit against RWU when they were already planning to steal it?

The John Birch Society was not named in the lawsuit, nor should it be so named. And no one is seeking a judgment (large or otherwise) against the Society. Breaking into a building under cover of darkness and organizing a team of volunteers, equipped with sleeping bags, to forcibly occupy it by means of a round-the-clock sit-in certainly are not among the dignified tactics the Society would have ever endorsed. On the other hand, Art, you and the others are trying to cast this as a JBS suit in order to use JBS funds to defend your personal illegal actions.

Lie #3: ♦One of the reasons that we are fearful of having our buildings controlled by this trust is that we know of nothing to stop them from charging us rent, or simply kicking us out.♦

Correction Please! Art has several ♦free♦ lawyers plus the plain text language of the Covenant at his disposal. I♦d like to think that Art is not that stupid! The Trust controls nothing but the Covenant and the Covenant only restricts the sale or mortgage of the buildings. Its purpose is clearly spelled out. This expressed fear of being charged rent or being kicked out is a lie likely invented to alarm and mislead.

Lie #4: ♦But the actions of literally a few people working with RWU and Mr. Smith are troubling since they are spending a great deal of time contacting our donors, not so much trying to solicit funds for RWU as they are trying to stop funds from coming to JBS.♦

Correction Please! This is an easy lie to disprove. Those reading this can answer for themselves. Honestly, have any of you been contacted by Vance Smith or any of his staff at RWU and asked to stop sending funds to JBS? Please come forward if you have. On the other hand, have any of you been contacted by anyone on the JBS staff under Art Thompson♦s control and asked to stop funding RWU? You can judge the truth on this issue.

Speaking of truth, let♦s shift more specifically to that subject. Here are some truths about you, Art, that need to be told.

Truth #1: Art, do the donors, the Council, and the staff know that you were the first one to express alarm over Jack McManus♦ anti-Jewish/anti-Masonic speeches and that you were the one who originally brought his activities to management♦s attention?

Truth #2: Art, do they know it was you, first through your daughter and

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then through Hal Shurtleff, who ordered and received copies of the videos from the St. Benedict Center and turned them over to us?

Truth #3: Art, do they know of your memo ([attached](#)) of October 22, 2000 to Vance Smith ♦ copies that were provided by Vance to the Executive Committee at the time ♦ where you suggested that:

- ♦ Jack♦s talks at these Catholic conferences have ♦been going on for at least 3 ♦ years, at least with the anti-Semitic dialog♦;
- ♦ Management get Jack to resign in order to avoid the potential backlash from his anti-Semitic remarks;
- ♦ Management put together an incriminating video comprised of short clips of Jack♦s most offensive remarks;
- ♦ In an effort to keep his position, Jack could potentially bypass the Executive Committee by using the ♦incorporators,♦ turning the organization on its head (as your team recently did).

Truth #4: Art, do they know that, after years of working with Jack, we could not get him to back completely away from his statements and his extracurricular speaking, and that you were fully aware that in 2002 we were forced into a plan to gradually move Jack into the background and take from him the title of president?

Truth #5: Art, do they know that at the first Council Meeting following the *Bulletin* announcement that Jack was stepping down as president, your friend Cliff Wasem started a campaign to make you president in Jack♦s place?

And my last questions to you, Art, are: Why? What has been your motive? Why the hypocrisy concerning Jack McManus? Why the well orchestrated smear campaign against Vance Smith, turning so many against the finest leader we♦ve had since Robert Welch? Why the smear campaign against us on the Executive Committee who have given so much and so many years to the Society? Is it just a lust for power? Is it just so you can be CEO? Or, is it something more sinister?

Now my questions to the donors, the Council, and the staff:

Question 1: Do you understand that the Society has been taken over through lies and deception?

Question 2: Can you see that Vance Smith and the former Executive Committee did all that they could do to quietly deal with Jack McManus, and that now Jack must be removed from leadership to prove to the world that the JBS does not share his views on Jews and Masons?

Question 3: Can you now see that Art has manipulated JBS staff and Council members with lies and deception and that he must be removed

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from leadership immediately?

If you understand and act, then the John Birch Society can still be saved. Many of us have been in the Society for more than four decades. We know that it is the only organization that can possibly give leadership to the American people and stop the godless conspiracy. We have never sat idly by while the Insiders deceived relative to world and national issues. So will we now sit by and watch these men destroy our only hope ♦ the John Birch Society? Well, I will not do that!

I am very proud of Walt Ruckel, Keith Van Buskirk, the former leadership team, Don Fotheringham, Allen Bubolz, and others who have stayed the course these last five months.

Under the terrible assaults on most of them, they could have easily and justifiably walked away from all this. But they did not ♦ we did not. And you♦ll never know the tremendous sacrifices made to help preserve the Society for you and for our nation.

Back to Art Thompson. If you were ever a Bircher ♦ prove it. Admit what you have done and resign from all leadership positions. We have a country to save and you need to get out of the way.

Sincerely,

Wayne C. Rickert

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Wayne Rickert takes Glenn Schmitz to the Woodshed

On July 11, 2006, JBS Council Member Glenn Schmitz wrote a letter to former Executive Committee member Wayne Rickert, pleading with Mr. Rickert to support those presently at the helm of the JBS. Apparently in dire financial straits, the JBS is in desperate need of the generous financial support that Mr. Rickert had been providing prior to the abusive treatment he received at the hands of the organization's current leaders. Following is Mr. Schmitz's original letter and Mr. Rickert's reply.

- [Glenn Schmitz's July 11th Letter to Wayne Rickert](#)
 - [Wayne Rickert Responds to Glenn Schmitz](#)
-

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Rickert refutes Eisenberg

The following letter is David Eisenberg's response to my letter of July 3. In his letter Mr. Eisenberg (a JBS council member) refers twice to Wayne Rickert, a long-time member of the Executive Committee. It seems only appropriate, therefore, that Mr. Rickert, rather than I, should answer Mr. Eisenberg. I have posted both letters here, one right after the other.

● [David Eisenberg's email to Don Fotheringham](#)

● [Rickert to Eisenberg](#)

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Rickert/Eisenberg Exchange cont'd

The following is a continuation of the exchange between Wayne Rickert and David Eisenberg. [Click here to see their initial exchange.](#) Below is David Eisenberg's response to Wayne Rickert's letter of July 11, followed by Wayne Rickert's final refutation.

- [David Eisenberg's July 15th Letter to Wayne Rickert](#)
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Final letter from Wayne Rickert to David Eisenberg...

July 25, 2006

Dear David,

Thank you for your letter of July 15th. You certainly confirm what I stated in my earlier letter to you. You write, ♦I appreciate your concern over my appearing to be inconsistent with my statements concerning the actions taken to relieve Vance Smith of his office in JBS, but I have to say that the various communications which I had received from everyone went a long way to causing a change in understanding as to what was happening.♦

What was happening was that a leftist-style smear campaign, orchestrated over several months (Art Crino admitted being involved as early as April 2005), was attacking G. Vance Smith. In your letter, you admit that you went against your own good judgment and instead swallowed ♦the various communications which I had received from everyone♦.♦

You state, ♦♦I am not so pig-headed that I would continue to defend an incorrect position once I was proven wrong.♦ Well, Dave, you have been proven wrong over and over again, even though you will find some way of dismissing it ♦ call it ♦pig-headed♦ if you like. I♦ll illustrate with an example or two.

You make this interesting statement, ♦My exchange of letters and phone calls with Jack made me feel that Jack was not an anti-Semite. Jack has not been allowed to continue speaking in such a manner.♦ What in the world are you saying? If Jack was not speaking in an anti-Semitic tone, then why was he ♦not allowed to continue speaking in such a manner?♦

You further state, ♦What Jack had said about the Jews did not imply that the Jewish religion is deadly.♦

In a speech entitled ♦Conspiracy Against the Catholic Church♦ written and delivered by Jack on a number of occasions, including the

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videotaped program at the St. Benedict Center in 1997, Jack stated, ♦From the year 33, when Christ did found His Church onward the Jewish Religion was dead from that day forward, but not deadly. After the year 70, the Jewish religion became not only dead, but deadly.♦ Jack then went on to try and explain how the militant Jews behind the Masons were the real Conspiracy.

I have been told that you have a copy of the video excerpts with this clip on it. You must have seen, as well as heard, Jack making those statements. How can you still say that Jack did not say these things? Dave, you might be the only Jew alive who would excuse that comment away as not being anti-Semitic.

When the former Executive Committee learned of Jack♦s conduct in 2000, we did censure Jack and put him on probation. In 2003, after Jack continued to speak at forums where these kinds of comments were being made by other speakers at the events, we finally took from him the title of ♦President♦ and started to phase him out of the JBS public eye.

Later, we were to find out that during the summer of 2005, Jack brazenly admitted that he was slated to speak at this same forum. Please don♦t try to tell me that ♦Jack has not been allowed to continue speaking in such a manner.♦ I have the evidence that proves otherwise.

You ask, ♦... taking into consideration your statement that you are doing all you can to restore the JBS.... WHY HAVE YOU STOPPED YOUR ADS IN TNA? Do you wish to bankrupt JBS in order to be able to reclaim it?♦

You should know that prior to our resignations from the Executive Committee the current leaders were well aware that our continued financial support was on the table. They clearly considered our support unimportant, and even expressed that opinion, when they chose to attack us and go ahead with their scheme to seize power.

Walt, Keith, and I are certainly eager to support the JBS under sound leadership. But don♦t expect us to fund the folly of foolish, irresponsible men, who don♦t even have the sense to anticipate the consequences of their actions.

After withdrawing our advertising support, these men you now favor rewarded our long-standing loyalty to JBS by breaking into RWU and stupidly ignoring the established corporate governance structure. Then they filed a lawsuit against us filled with vindictive nonsense. Their reckless, irresponsible actions have already cost us hundreds of thousands of dollars in legal fees. Would you have wanted us to fund their attack against us, too? Give me a break!

I could continue to go point-by-point through your letter, but to do so would be unnecessarily redundant. I have already presented the truth to you in my letter of July 12, 2006.

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David, do the right thing. Do what your instincts told you to do in the first place. Swallow your pride, admit you have been wrong, link arms with other Council members and insist the former Executive Committee be put back in place and let them, with the former Council members, deal with these problems. A new, neutered Executive Committee is no remedy if it is manned by Jack and Art cronies with no real authority to select the leader, serving only at the pleasure of Jack's Board of Incorporators. It only supplies window dressing to appease the uninformed.

I do not suppose you will do any of that, but what you have done very clearly is to make a public statement that will resonate for years to come. You, as one entrusted to stand for right, have aligned yourself with those who will go down in history for destroying The John Birch Society.

This is the last I have to say to you on this matter.

Sincerely,

Wayne C. Rickert

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